

### Weariness with Clinton undermines Gore, poll finds

WASHINGTON (R) — Public weariness with President Bill Clinton's White House scandals have contributed to a drop in the favourability rating of Vice President Al Gore, the front-runner for the 2000 Democratic presidential nomination, a poll released on Saturday showed. The decline was also traced to Gore's own image woes, with many seeing him as "boring," "weak" or just "okay," according to the survey by the Pew Research Centre for the People & the Press. The poll of 1,786 adults, conducted March 24-30, found Gore's favourability rating at 47 per cent, down from 58 per cent in December. It marked the first time that Gore's favourability rating had slipped below 50 per cent since questions in 1997 about his own fund-raising activities.

# Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation  
جوردان تايمز يومية مستقلة تصدر عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية. الراي.

### Saudi-based relief agency sends \$12 million to Kosovo

JEDDAH (AFP) — The International Islamic Relief Agency (IIIRA) on Saturday said it had sent some \$12 million worth of aid to the Kosovo refugees, the official Saudi news agency SPA reported. About \$4 million comes in the form of cash, with the rest made up of food, medicines, tents and clothes, SPA said. Saudi Arabia has already sent two planes with a total of 120 tonnes of aid for the refugees including tents, blankets and food. King Fahd on Saturday said he would send 2,000 tonnes of dates to the refugees.

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## King, Qadhafi hold talks on Jordanian-Libyan relations

### Arafat receives support from King, Libyan leader on statehood

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Abdullah began a two-day visit to Libya on Saturday for talks with Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi.

King Abdullah, accompanied by a delegation including Prime Minister Abdur-Ra'uf S. Rawabdeh and Royal Court Chief Abdul Karim Kabariti, congratulated Qadhafi on the lifting of the U.N. sanctions imposed on his country following the 1988 Lockerbie bombing. The sanctions were lifted after two Libyan suspects allegedly involved in the affair were handed over for trial earlier this month.

King Abdullah was quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as expressing hope that the lifting of the sanctions would open a new era that will witness a strengthened Arab national economy and fulfilment of the aspirations of the Libyan people for a more prosperous future.

The King also voiced hope that the end of the sanctions would be followed by similar

moves to end the embargoes on Iraq and Sudan.

Petra said the two leaders reviewed Jordanian-Libyan relations with a particular focus on economic cooperation.

King Abdullah said Jordan is ready to offer its expertise to Libya to help strengthen the country's national economy.

King Abdullah briefed Qadhafi on his tour of the Gulf states and Egypt, which aimed at restoring Arab solidarity.

Petra reported that the two leaders underlined the need to end differences among Arab countries and to enhance collective Arab efforts to deal with the common challenges facing the Nation.

Earlier, King Abdullah and Qadhafi met with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat in Sirte for talks on the peace process and the latest developments in the Middle East.

Arafat briefed the two leaders on the outcome of his recent international tour to

present the Palestinians' views and seek advice on the proposed declaration of an independent state in May.

King Abdullah and President Qadhafi reaffirmed their countries' support for the Palestinian people in their struggle to regain their legitimate rights and establish an independent state in Palestine, even if the date for its declaration is postponed.

King Abdullah said the peace accords, including the Wye River and Hebron agreements, should be respected. The King also stressed the need to begin final status negotiations after the Israeli elections.

Present at the meetings was the delegation accompanying King Abdullah, which in addition to Rawabdeh and Kabariti includes HRH Prince Ghazi Ben Mohammad, the King's advisor on tribal affairs, General Intelligence Department Director Samih Battikh and Jordanian Ambassador to Libya Ahmad Mubieddin.

Also Saturday, King

Abdullah visited a monument in Sirte commemorating the Libyan soldiers who fell in the Battle of Qurdabieh in 1915.

The King, who was accompanied by Crown Prince Hamzah, inspected documents and portraits linked to the battle and laid wreaths at the memorial site.

King Abdullah and Prince Hamzah later visited the man-made river in Libya and were briefed on related projects. The river provides 6.3 million cubic metres of fresh water every day for irrigation.

The other members of the delegation accompanied the King and Crown Prince on the tour.

Before the King's departure from Jordan, HRH Prince Mohammad was sworn in as Regent. HRH Crown Prince Hamzah left prior to King Abdullah's departure for Tripoli.

A Royal Decree was issued appointing Deputy Prime Minister Marwan Mroued as acting prime minister.



DRUZE DEMONSTRATE ON GOLAN: Druze demonstrators throw stones on Saturday at Israeli soldiers on the outskirts of Majdel Shams, the main village on the strategic Golan Heights, which Israel occupied in 1967, and the closest to the Israeli-Syrian ceasefire line. Four Druze were wounded in clashes with Israeli troops following a Syrian independence day rally (AFP photo)

## Israel warns Lebanon against using civilians to liberate Arnoun

### Arab League demands end to village's occupation

Agencies

A SENIOR Israeli official warned Lebanon against using civilians to fight the Jewish state's occupation of Arnoun, saying Beirut would be responsible for any harm that came to them.

"We are warning the [Lebanese] state against the use of civilians as human shields or to carry out acts of sabotage against Arnoun and the security zone," Israel maintains in south Lebanon, Uri Lubrani said.

The use of civilians in that way would "provoke a situation for which only the Lebanese government, guarantor of [civilian] security, would be responsible," Lubrani, the coordinator of Israeli activities in Lebanon, said.

He was speaking on Friday on the radio station of the South Lebanon Army (SLA), Israel's allied militia in Lebanon.

Meanwhile, Israeli Defence

Minister Moshe Arens on Saturday defended Israel's occupation of Arnoun saying it was an essential part of operations against the Shiite Muslim Hizbollah.

"The Israeli army's operation was a necessary part of the fight against Hizbollah," Arens told public television.

The Israeli defence minister said he still intended to continue his policy of reducing Israeli troop numbers in Lebanon to the minimum necessary to maintain control of the "security zone."

"The number of soldiers in Lebanon was recently reduced and I intend to continue along that path," he said.

Israeli soldiers and SLA militiamen occupied the village of Arnoun, which lies just north of the self-declared "security zone" on Thursday night, a move the Israeli military described as a "preventive security operation."

One Israeli soldier was killed and several wounded Monday in a bomb attack claimed by Hizbollah near Beaufort Castle — an 11th century fort overlooking Arnoun and which is Israel's largest military post in the zone.

Meanwhile, the Arab League called on Saturday for Arab and U.N. diplomatic efforts to force Israel to end its occupation of Arnoun and other Arab territory.

"It is time to adopt a firm Arab position against repeated Israeli attacks against Lebanon and other occupied Arab territory," said the Arab League assistant secretary general, Ahmad Ben Helli.

He urged Arab countries to launch "an effective political and diplomatic campaign to support the Lebanese government in its struggle to extend its sovereignty over the entire Lebanese territory."

## Israel bars Palestinian VIP from Jerusalem

BALATA (AP) — Palestinian Cabinet minister Ziyad Abu Ziyad was detained by Israeli police and escorted out of Jerusalem after being told that he was no longer allowed to enter the city legally, he said.

Abu Ziyad, a minister for Jerusalem affairs, was pulled over by border police as he drove through Arab east Jerusalem in his black Mercedes with Palestinian National Authority (PNA) licence plates.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hard-line government has cracked down on any signs of PNA presence in Arab east Jerusalem, arguing that it infringes on Israeli sovereignty in the city. As the May 17 elections approach the government is making a concerted effort to take a tough stand on the city.

Abu Ziyad said the Israelis were trying to make an example out of him by stopping him. After hosting Europeans at the PLO's Jerusalem headquarters last month, Israel revoked his VIP credentials that allowed him to legally enter Jerusalem as a West Bank resident.

"They are looking for a show, no more than that," Abu Ziyad said as he waited to be released from police custody. Jerusalem police spokesman Shmuel Ben-Ruby said Abu Ziyad left the city limits with a police escort.

The Palestinians want Arab east Jerusalem as the capital of a future state.

Meanwhile, shooting automatic rifles into the air and donning black hoods, some 1,000 Palestinians rallied in memory of a slain PLO military chief on Saturday.

At the Balata refugee camp outside of the West Bank town of Nablus, the demonstrators carried photos of Abu Jihad, and pledged to continue his struggle for Palestinian independence.

They also demanded the release of Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails.

The rally, which was organised by Palestinian President Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction was dotted with banners that read "No peace until our prisoners are out of jail" and "No peace without a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital."

Abu Jihad, whose real name was Khalil Wazir, was shot to death in his villa on the outskirts of Tunis on April 16, 1988.

Israeli leaders believed he helped orchestrate the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip that had erupted several months earlier.

## NATO relief operation under way as refugees continue to flee Kosovo

Agencies

A NATO relief operation in Albania got under way on Saturday to help hundreds of thousands of refugees from Kosovo as the alliance launched a verbal offensive against alleged Serb atrocities in the province.

As NATO launched Operation Allied Harbour, aid workers warned they were being overwhelmed by a new exodus of Kosovo refugees.

Torrential rain, wind and thunderstorms worsened the already miserable conditions for latest arrivals. With tents full, families were huddled under plastic sheets.

Allied troops camped at Tirana airport have been loading military helicopters with supplies from some 60 aid flights a day to be ferried to the border.

Their task is also to move refugees to new camps, distribute aid, protect supply lines and support humanitarian groups.

Albanian Foreign Minister Pascal Milo accused Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic of ethnic cleansing in Kosovo, driving 100,000 more terrified ethnic Albanians towards his country.

Some 28,000 hungry and

exhausted ethnic Albanians have passed through Albania's main border crossing with Yugoslavia in the last 48 hours, the largest influx in 10 days. Refugees have told aid workers 50,000 or more may be following on behind.

In Brussels, NATO published an aerial photograph of what it said could be a mass grave containing 150 bodies in western Kosovo, citing it as evidence that Serb forces were summarily executing civilians.

Albania is already hosting 335,000 Kosovars, according to figures from the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and aid workers at the Morina border post said they were overwhelmed by refugees crossing into northern Albania at a rate of 1,000 an hour.

"We are appealing for help. We do not know where to put the people who are arriving," said UNHCR spokesman Jacques Franquin.

In Belgrade, the Yugoslav government said after a meeting with President Milosevic that national industrial production remained satisfactory despite the bombing.

But Belgrade remained silent on the detention of a Yugoslav officer by the U.S.

army in Albania.

The lieutenant was captured by the militant separatist Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and handed over to the Americans.

The man was being held at a secret location in Albania, the International Red Cross said. Three U.S. soldiers were seized by Yugoslav forces last month in the area of the Kosovo-Macedonia border.

In Brussels, in an attempt to regain the initiative in the propaganda war with Belgrade after Wednesday's bombing of a refugee convoy, NATO highlighted previously published reports from refugees which suggest that as many as 3,200 ethnic Albanians had been executed by Serb forces over the past three weeks.

Spokesman Jamie Shea said the alliance had proof that 18 villages in Kosovo had been completely burned out and 200 residential areas had been severely damaged by Serb forces.

He admitted, however, NATO had no independent way of verifying the refugees' claims.

Shea said he had no further information to release about NATO's bombing of a refugee convoy on Wednesday. "The investigation continues," he

said.

"People want justice to be done and they know NATO is there to get justice done," Shea said, adding mistakes would not prompt NATO citizens to call for a halt to the campaign.

"Just to call this off and do nothing would be to give a kind of carte blanche not just to Milosevic but to every other dictator around the world to brutally repress his population."

NATO admitted that recent days had seen Serb forces step up their operations, both against rebels of the KLA and civilians. But NATO said it destroyed seven Yugoslav tanks, plus troop carriers and field forces in Kosovo on Friday in its latest operations against the forces of Milosevic.

NATO's top commander General Wesley Clark voiced concern in Tirana Saturday over Serb attacks on northern Albania and pledged the alliance's support to prevent the violence from worsening.

"We are going to do everything we can to stabilise the situation in Albania. We're very concerned about the situation in the north," he said.

(Continued on page 2)

## Indian government toppled by single vote, Congress set to take power



Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi, left, is garlanded by supporters to celebrate the dismissal of India's ruling coalition government on Saturday. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's ruling coalition was removed from power by a vote of 270-269 (AP photo)

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's Hindu nationalist government collapsed Saturday after losing a confidence motion by a single vote, sparking fears of another shaky administration or fresh elections.

The parliamentary motion of confidence in Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's 13-month-old coalition was defeated by 270 votes to 269, and triggered an immediate seven-per cent plunge in share prices.

The result signalled a probable return to power of the main opposition Congress Party, led by Italian-born Sonia Gandhi, but could also force an unwanted general election.

After the vote, Vajpayee submitted his resignation

to President K.R. Narayanan.

"The president accepted it and asked me to continue until an alternative government is formed," he said. "The future will say how stable the next government will be."

Asked for his personal reaction, Vajpayee replied: "I feel free."

Following an emergency meeting of the Congress' top decision-making body, senior party leader Arjun Singh said "the initiative is now in the hands of the president."

If Narayanan invites Gandhi to form an alternative government, "she will say I can," he added.

Arjun also said that Gandhi had shown "no displeasure or hesitation or

protest" at the prospect of succeeding her husband and mother-in-law — both assassinated — as prime minister.

Gandhi's main problem will be to persuade the president that she has the numerical support to rule the country effectively. Failure to do so could result in a general election, India's third in two years.

Congress has only 140 seats in the 545-member parliament and will have to rely on the backing of more than a dozen smaller opposition groups, many of whom are traditional rivals.

However, Congress parliamentary chief Sharad Pawar said the party was confident that "all secular forces will come together to form the government."

Sonia Gandhi is a member of India's Nehru-Gandhi political dynasty, and by becoming premier would follow in the steps of her husband Rajiv, mother-in-law Indira Gandhi and father Jawaharlal Nehru.

Home Minister L.K. Advani said the outgoing coalition was proud of its record.

"As we lay down office, we do so with a sense of satisfaction that the government of Prime Minister Vajpayee has discharged its duty," Advani said.

In a final appeal to the house before the confidence vote, Vajpayee had defended his government's record.

"The situation has improved be it security, or

the economy or foreign policy. Our claim is that in every sphere, we have been successful," Vajpayee said.

Jubilant Congress supporters set off firecrackers at party headquarters and near Gandhi's high-security residence at news of the government's defeat.

It was not immediately clear what form an alternative government would take, with Congress officials undecided whether to head a coalition or rule alone with the outside support of other parties.

Many Congress leaders fear another coalition would be prey to the same instability that plagued Vajpayee's troubled administration.

(Continued on page 2)



# U.S. hesitant about new U.N. policy toward Iraq

UNITED NATIONS (R) — The United States dismissed on Friday Russia's proposals to lift sanctions against Iraq but also said it had problems with a more amenable British-Dutch resolution on future U.N. policy toward Baghdad.

Security Council members, seeking to heal rifts over its policy toward Iraq, began to line up behind the rival resolutions, with China and France supporting Russia's proposals to lift U.N. sanctions on Iraqi civilian goods and asking Secretary General Kofi Annan to form a new U.N. arms control body.

Members, attending a closed-door council session, remained divided. But, with the exception of the United States, they all agreed that UNSCOM, the U.N. Special Commission in charge of dismantling Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, needed to be abolished or changed substantially.

The United States said it had some problems with the Anglo-Dutch draft, which would replace UNSCOM with a new body with similar powers. But U.S. delegate Peter Burleigh rejected out of hand the Russian resolution, saying it was "not a serious proposal and we are

not going to treat it as such." Burleigh said he saw little need to change the name of UNSCOM as Britain proposed and objected to provisions in its draft that would lower temporarily Iraq's contributions to a fund for victims of Baghdad's 1990 invasion of Kuwait.

The Anglo-Dutch draft also says there should be no ceiling on the amount of oil Iraq can export under U.N. supervision, a proposal the United States had endorsed earlier. But Baghdad currently is not able to meet the U.N. ceiling of \$5.256 billion every six months because of low oil prices and its dilapidated oil industry.

"We think that the draft is a good basis to work on but we do have some problems with it," Burleigh told reporters.

The two resolutions are the first attempt to put concrete plans before a divided Security Council on how to cope with its Iraqi policy following bombings that began in mid-December.

Weapons inspectors have been out of Iraq since Dec. 15, the day before U.S.-British air strikes began because of Baghdad's refusal to cooperate with them. Iraq has said they can-

not return as long as stringent sanctions, imposed after its 1990 invasion of Kuwait, are in place.

The British draft would change the name of UNSCOM to UNCIIM, or the U.N. Commission on Investigation, Inspection and Monitoring. If Iraq did not cooperate, it says UNCIIM should organise border monitors to check for weapons materials.

The new arms commission it proposed would be under a new executive director, succeeding Australian Richard Butler, who has incurred the wrath of such council members as Russia, China and France. Butler has said he is leaving his post at the end of June after two years as UNSCOM's executive chairman.

With the five veto-bearing permanent council members — the United States, Britain, France, China and Russia — deadlocked, Britain hopes for support among the other 10 non-permanent members in addition to the Netherlands.

But Brazil's Ambassador Celso Amorim said the British-Dutch resolution needed more of an inducement for Iraq to cooperate — such as allowing foreign

oil companies to invest in Iraqi export industries such as oil. Diplomats said Canada agreed.

Russia's Ambassador Sergei Lavrov insisted his resolution, which China co-sponsored, was the only feasible one that could bring the United Nations arms inspectors back to Iraq.

He said that as soon as a new arms control body was set up most economic sanctions should be lifted. When Iraq had accounted for prisoners and looted property from its 1990 occupation of Kuwait, its assets abroad should be unfrozen.

And he said the U.N. embargo on conventional arms — tanks, anti-aircraft missiles — could be lifted once it was clear Iraq no longer had any weapons of mass destruction.

French Ambassador Alain Dejammet said he agreed with most of the Russian proposals, adding that the Security Council after the 1991 Gulf War envisioned "maintaining a very strict arms control but not to maintain eternally the population of Iraq under civil sanctions."



A young Turkish woman waves a Democratic Left Party (DSP) flag, with its white dove symbol, during Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit's address to supporters at his last election campaign rally in Istanbul's Kadikoy district, Saturday, before today's nationwide elections. Analysts predict that Ecevit and his Democratic Left Party may well garner the most votes in the general election, but end up with fewer seats in parliament than the pro-religious Virtue Party, tipped to come in second at the polls (AFP photo)

## Indian government toppled

(Continued from page 1)

Political analyst G.V.L. Narasimha Rao described the result as a shocking defeat, but added there could be a silver lining for Vajpayee's Hindu-nationalist BJP party, which had dominated the coalition.

"Going by the public mood which wanted the government to continue, there could be a sympathy wave in favour of the BJP," Rao said.

"It looks like elections are inevitable, probably some time in November," he added.

Saturday's vote resolved a political crisis sparked when a government partner with 18 MPs decided to walk out, leaving the ruling coalition more than a dozen seats short of a majority.

The 30-share BSE sensitive index plunged 245.93 points or 6.9 per cent to close at 3,326.98 points on news of the government's collapse.

Industrialists and financiers expressed concern that the government's fall would delay the passage of Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha's deficit-cutting budget for the year beginning April 1.

"I do not think a government with a majority of one vote can really do anything for the economy," said Rajkumar Pitamber, director at the industrial group Mahindra and Mahindra.

## Turkish Islamist party faces election showdown

KAYSERI (R) — Turkey's Islam-based Virtue Party made a final bid to rally support on Saturday, on the eve of elections which are expected to bring a showdown with its secular rivals.

A passionate crowd of several thousand cheered Virtue leader Necati Kutan as he arrived for a rally in the central Anatolian town of Kayseri, a traditional stronghold of conservative and religious votes.

Supporters waved red-and-white Virtue flags and chanted

"Prime Minister Kutan" as the Islamist leader spoke.

"Let us see who will dare to stop us from coming to power after people's votes make us the biggest party," Kutan said to rapturous applause in the town square.

Virtue is regarded as one of the front-runners in the general and local polls alongside the leftist Democratic Left Party of Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit.

Political analysts forecast the elections will produce a splintered parliament similar to the

one which emerged from 1995 polls, making a multi-party coalition likely.

The secularist establishment, which edged an Islamist-led coalition out of power in 1997, is widely seen as reluctant to see a return to power of what it sees as the representative of political Islam in secular but overwhelmingly Muslim Turkey.

Virtue is effectively a successor to the Islamist Welfare Party, which was outlawed last year for trying to subvert the

secular constitution in a one-year coalition with conservatives.

It has toned down much of its predecessor's rhetoric but is still frowned upon by the powerful military.

Among the religious-based reforms sought by Virtue is an end to a ban on female students wearing Islamist-style head scarves in university.

Kutan took up the ban as a human rights issue.

"If there were human rights in Turkey, could they strike our

chaste girls with truncheons in universities?" he asked as a group of headscarved women, wrapped in customary full-length long coats, looked on.

Last year, a previous government tightened up the law banning head scarves from universities and government offices, triggering clashes between police and Islamist students.

The women were segregated at the front of the crowd, monitored by a group of several hundred riot police. Observers

said it was the most crowded and lively of Virtue's rallies.

"If there were human rights, could they have jailed Tayyip Erdogan?" Kutan continued, in a reference to the former Istanbul mayor imprisoned for reciting a poem seen as inciting hatred along religious lines.

"Break the hands which lay a finger on Tayyip," the crowd chanted in response. A colour portrait of Erdogan, painted on a huge cloth, hung down over the throng.

## Muslims celebrate new Islamic year

CAIRO (AP) — Millions of Muslims celebrated the new Islamic year on Saturday, a holiday of low-key religious events in many Arab countries.

Government offices, banks and schools were closed for the first day of 1420.

Jordan announced a one-day national holiday during which the government banned serving alcohol in public. Jordanian clergymen held a special sermon during which Koranic verses were recited.

In the Gulf nation of Oman, Islamic lectures were held in mosques extolling the importance of the new year.

In Egypt, Cairenes fleeing their dusty city swayed and danced to Arabic music aboard crowded boats sailing along the Nile River to popular picnic sites.

The year, set according to the lunar calendar, marks the Hijra or

"migration," when Islam's Prophet Mohammad and his followers fled from Mecca to Yathrib, later called Medina — two towns in Saudi Arabia — to escape religious persecution.

The flight took place in 622, and Moham-mad used the event as a reference point to all other major dates. Subsequently, in 637, Caliph Omar instituted the year of the flight as the first year of the Islamic era.

Saturday was the first day of Muharram, the first month of the new year.

In most of the Arab World, the day is a national holiday. But in Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Persian Iran, it's a normal working day.

## NATO relief operation under way as refugees continue to flee Kosovo

(Continued from page 1)

Yugoslav forces have used artillery fire on villages in northern Albania where fighters from the KLA have taken refuge over the past weeks.

There have also been reports of incursions by Serb forces.

Earlier, in the Macedonian capital Skopje, Clark said that unless President Milosevic changed his policy on Kosovo, NATO forces would destroy everything he valued.

Macedonia, swamped by

120,000 ethnic Albanians fleeing Kosovo, clashed with the West on Saturday over whether to open new emergency reception centres, saying it had no wish to become a vast refugee camp.

Defence Minister Nikola Kljucic categorically rejected demands by NATO, the European Union and the U.N. to open new camps.

"Macedonia does not wish to become a huge refugee camp," said Kljucic. But the United Nations refugee agency said new camps were urgently needed to put up thousands of new arrivals.

The Macedonian government also said that it discovered a large cache of weapons belonging to Kosovo Albanian guerrillas in an abandoned mine near its border with Yugoslavia.

Interior Minister Pavle Trajanov said it underlined growing threats to Macedonian security from ethnic Albanian separatism.

Russian President Boris Yeltsin will meet his envoy to the Kosovo conflict, Viktor Chernenyrdin, Premier Yevgeny Primakov and Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov on Monday to discuss ways of

ending the fighting. Russian agencies said.

Chernenyrdin, a former prime minister, was quoted as saying he may travel to Yugoslavia and other countries next week.

Yeltsin charged him on Wednesday with finding a political solution to end NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia, which Moscow has strongly opposed.

No NATO bombing attacks were reported overnight in Belgrade and there was some light relief with the staging of the city's annual marathon race and

the reopening of three out of seven McDonald's fast-food restaurants.

The official news agency Tanjug said that at Valjevo, 80 kilometres southwest of the capital, four missiles had fallen on a factory which had been almost totally destroyed the previous night.

Yugoslav television said on Saturday the OSCE, Albania, Slovenia and even George Soros were helping KLA rebels in their campaign against Belgrade.

A report by state television said it had uncovered evi-

dence of foreign help for the KLA in a burnt out "terrorist training camp" near the village of Gornje Obrnje in Kosovo.

In Dresden, EU finance ministers holding a two-day meeting counted the cost of the war in Kosovo and an eventual peace settlement. New German Finance Minister Hans Eichel said now was not the time for penny pinching.

"We paid for German unity — and now we will have to pay for peace in the Balkans," Eichel said.

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 4773111-19

### PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 French Programme  
18:30 The Prince and The Pauper  
19:00 Le Journal  
19:15 French Programme  
19:30 News headlines  
19:33 French Programme  
20:30 Walker Texas Ranger  
21:15 Divine Pledge  
22:00 News in English  
22:20 Falling for a Dancer

### PRAYER TIMES

03:38 Fajr  
04:59 (Sunrise) Duha  
11:35 Dhuhur  
15:12 'Asr  
18:10 Maghreb  
19:32 'Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church  
Sweifeh, Tel. 5930740  
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 4632785  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 4624590  
Terra Sancta Church Tel. 4622366  
Anglican Church Tel. 4624853/4624811  
St. Afrem Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 4771751  
Amman International Church Tel. 5865897  
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 5688404  
The Evangelical Local Church

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

in Amman Tel. 5811295

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints Tel. 4654932  
St. John the Baptist at De la Salle College Tel. 5661757

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 4637440

Greek Orthodox Church Tel. 4646138

Church of Presentation, Sweifeh Tel. 5920146

The United Catholic Church Tel. 4624757

The English-Language Catholic Parish Tel. 4614190

Evangelical Free Church Tel. 4892679

The Baptist Church Tel. 4628052

The Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 4771331

The Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 4775261

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Temperatures are expected to rise today and tomorrow becoming 5-7 degrees centigrade above average. It will be hot during the day becoming warm at night. Clouds will appear at different altitudes and winds easterly moderate. In Aqaba, it will be relatively hot, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm.

Min/Max. temp.

Amman 15/28  
Aqaba 19/34  
Deserts 12/30  
Jordan Valley 18/33

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 27 Aqaba 32 Humidity readings: Amman 18 per cent, Aqaba 26 per cent.

Following are the temperatures expected today in the following areas:

Ajloun 12/25

Jerash 15/28

Um Qays 13/29

Madaba 15/28

Petra 12/30

Dead Sea 18/35

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN: Dr. Abbas Al Hakim 4885446

Dr. Arafat Ashhab 5602507

Dr. Ayman Muhtaseb 4875748

Dr. Jamal Jorrah 5347351

AMMAN: Firas Pharmacy 5661912

Al Salam Pharmacy 4636730

Mayadah Pharmacy 5537004

Rukn Al Dawa Pharmacy 5536169

IRBID: Dr. Mahmud Abu Haja (02)245209

Fou'ad Pharmacy (02)275360

ZARQA: Dr. Mazen Saffarini (05)985832

Palestine Pharmacy (05)983562

### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 4637111

Civil Defence Department 5661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 4630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 4621111, 4637777

Fire Brigade 4617101

Blood Bank 4775121

Highway Police 5343402

Traffic Police 4896390

Public Security Dept 4630321

Hotel Complaints 5605800

Price Complaints 5661176

Water & Sewerage Complaints 4897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 7871111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) 121

Overseas Calls 0152

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 4623101

Abdali Tel. Repairs 5661101

Jordan Television 4773111

Radio Jordan 4774111

Water Authority 5680100

J. Electricity Authority 5515615

Electric Power Co. 4636381

RJ Flight Information 44-53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 44-53200

### HOSPITALS

AMMAN: The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 5921199

The Islamic Abdl 5666131/7

Husseini Medical Centre 5856856

Luzulla 4630195

Khalidi Maternity 4642362

Akshih Maternity 4642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity 4642362

Malhas, J. Amman 4636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 5607071

Shmeisani Hospital 5607431

Jordan Hospital 5607530

University Hospital 5353444

Al-Muasher Hospital 566727/9

Al-Ahli, Abdali 5664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 4777101/3

Al-Bashir 4775111/26

Army, Marka 4891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital 5157100

Amal Hospital 5607155

Al Amal Cancer Centre 5353000

Jerusalem Hospital 4387181

ZARQA: Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323

Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986731

Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)980990

IRBID: Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555

Roman Catholic Hospital

(02)272275

Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)7101372, (02)7103101

Rosary Sisters Hospital (02)7102331, (02)7102011

Speciality Hospital (02)7103100

AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital (03)2014111

08:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

08:10 Beirut (RJ)

08:30 Jeddah (RJ)

09:05 Dhahran, Riyadh (RJ)

09:05 Bombay (RJ)

09:30 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)

16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)

17:50 London (RJ)

18:10 Athens (RJ)

18:20 Madrid, Geneva (RJ)

18:25 Frankfurt (RJ)

19:35 Rome (RJ)

20:00 Paris, Brussels (RJ)

22:10 Vienna, Aqaba (RJ)

22:15 Paris (add) (RJ)



## Al Qasaba defeats 'anti-normalisation committee' with a full house at first performance of 'The Immigrant'

By Dima Hamdan

AMMAN — Despite attempts from the professional associations' "anti-normalisation committee" to instigate a boycott of the 6th International Theatre Festival — particularly performances by the Palestinian Al Qasaba Theatre Group — the Royal Cultural Centre was unusually crowded on Friday and Saturday, with people coming to see the group's production, *The Immigrant*.

The play is adapted from "The Immigrant of Brisbane" by George Shihadeh, a renowned Lebanese writer. The play is a straightforward black comedy, dealing with social and moral corruption, but also bears deeper political connotations.

The story is set in "Deir Al Zaytoon," a small Palestinian village that has changed dramatically and is now surrounded by Jewish settlements. One night, a Palestinian immigrant, played by Mohammad Bakri, accompanied by a chauffeur (Makram Khoury), returns to the town but dies shortly from a heart attack.

The next morning, we see a vibrant and preserved Palestinian community, villagers

dressed in traditional clothing and enjoying a secure and secluded life. The mayor informs the villagers about the incident and says he discovered a letter in the deceased's coat, stating that he had come to see his son. Therefore, one of the village's women must have had an affair with the deceased and gave birth to his child.

The mayor, again played by Khoury, also reveals another secret: The deceased was carrying a suitcase with over one million dinars, which was his son's inheritance. Therefore, anyone admitting to having an illegitimate son would be the rightful owner of the money.

Life-long relationships are on the verge of devastation because of a dead stranger, and the news creates chaos among couples.

Men start questioning their wives, since their only objective is to preserve their reputation and honour. Only one, however, is seduced by the notion of becoming rich, so he suggests that his wife claim that their eldest son is the "illegitimate child" in question.

The woman is enraged and humiliated by her husband's immoral proposition. She

attempts to wake the villagers and tell them of her misfortune, but her husband stabs her to death and tells the villagers that he cleansed his honour because she gave birth to the stranger's son.

Women refuse to believe that their friend could have sinned, but their cries and protests are overpowered by the shouts of men who hail their friend as a true male hero.

One evening, the same chauffeur who escorted the deceased arrives to town with another immigrant. The latter is trying to remember his hometown, but suspects that the chauffeur has taken him to the wrong place. The chauffeur admits that he always takes immigrants to "Deir Al Zaytoon" because it could be mistaken as anyone's hometown and because his car could not reach further distances.

At this point, the audience realises that the chauffeur's mistake has created an uproar in the wrong town and caused the death of an innocent woman.

Al Qasaba made a performance worthy of a play that is full of irony, beautifully contrasted emotions, and energetic choreography.

## Islamists reclaim JMA presidency

By Mohammad Ben Hussein

AMMAN — In a heated battle, the Islamists on Friday tallied another victory in this spring's professional association elections when their candidate secured the helm of the Jordan Medical Association.

In one round of voting, Tareq Tahboub, the leading candidate for the White List — the Coalition of Islamists and Independents for Change and Renewal — gained 1,006 votes. His rival, Hassan Badran, leader of the leftist-nationalist Green List, lost by a small margin, obtaining 899 votes.

Tahboub replaces outgoing JMA President Bassam Dajani, also an Islamist. Dajani was not a contender for the post.

"All political parties put their weight in the presidential ring, because the real battle is for the president's post," said one observer.

Observers believe that the nationalist-leftist movement in the association has compromised its influence with perpetual internal disagreements, paving the way for the Islamists — both highly organised and disciplined — to reclaim the seat.

"The division and lack of coordination among doctors was the sole reason for losing the president's post," said one doctor. "A quick look at the elections results shows that the nationalists and leftist had a big chance of winning the presidency had they agreed among themselves on one

candidate," said the doctor who preferred anonymity. Hassan Badran, Ra'if Faris, and Ahmad Amouri ran for president in three different nationalist and leftist blocks.

The National Professional list, led by Ahmad Amouri, a Nasserite, gained 413 votes. The Independent Block, said to be supported by the Palestinian Fatah movement, and led by Ra'if Faris won 343 votes securing the fourth place.

Around 2,000 members out of the association's 4,820 registered members cast their ballots.

Many believe that the nationalists will still retain significant influence in the association, having retained four of the council's ten seats, as expected.

In an informal coalition with the one Fatah candidate, Mo'men Hadid, who won a seat, and two other "swing" council members of the White List — both independents — that trend should counter balance the four seats secured by the White List.

The new council is as follows: Bassem Kiswani, Jafer Ali Huneidi, Nasser Shomali and Nazih Ababneh (of the White List), Samir Samawi, Adam Abdullah, Hayer Obaidat and Mohammad Abadi (of the Green List), Hisham Al Ardha (of Jerusalem), and Momen Hadid (of Fatah).

Jerusalem candidate Hisham Arida secured the highest number of votes, gaining 1,683 votes. Fatah was able to secure the tenth council



Doctors cast their votes for a new two-year JMA council and presidency (Petra photo)

seat when its representative, Mo'men Hadid, beat five other Fatah candidates and gained 1,056 votes.

"Rivalry among executive council members will be very fierce since it is comprised of equal number of the two rivals," said another observer.

Many believe the election results will fail to rekindle interest in the association, since doctors maintain they have been disappointed by the practices of the Islamists in previous years.

They are accused of misuse of funds and corruption.

One doctor, who spoke to the Jordan Times ahead of the balloting, said around JD750,000 has been siphoned off of association coffers over

the past few years. The association is scheduled to form a special investigative committee to probe alleged misuse and corruption.

The nationalists alleged this year lost their last stronghold in Jordan Professional Association after receiving a stunning defeat in the Bar Association elections when they lost the president's post to the Islamists.

During the 1970s and 80s, when martial law was still in force, the associations were the most prominent outlets for political expression and acted as political fora in the absence of legalised political parties.

The executive council during the 1970s and early 1980s was dominated by national-

ists, who have always secured the president's post and the majority of council seats, leaving little room for Islamists.

But after decades of ongoing victories, the nationalists ceded the president's post in most associations to the Islamists, whom many believe are now trying to compensate for their absence in the political arena, particularly in Parliament.

The Islamists led a boycott of the 1997 Parliamentary elections in protest of the elections and press laws that they consider undemocratic. Nine other political parties, the country's 13 professional associations and several independent political personalities also joined the boycott.



Jordanians celebrate the 1420 Hijra (Islamic new year) at the King Abdullah Mosque (Reuters photo)

## Celebrate Earth Day: U.S. Embassy programme focuses on water conservation

AMMAN (J.T.) — The American Centre in Amman will celebrate Earth Day 1999 on Monday, April 19, at the U.S. Embassy in Amman. This year's celebration is dedicated to water awareness and conservation and highlights every individual's responsibility to protect water resources.

Earth Day '99 will host the premier of an educational puppet show entitled "A Drop

of Water!!!" an Arabic performance produced and presented by the Performing Arts Centre of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation. Earth Day '99 will also feature an Arabic language video produced by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature on water resources and practices in Jordan. The day's activities will also include displays and exhibits about water conservation and usage mounted by

the RSCN, the Jordan Environmental Society, the Friends of the Environmental Society and the Jordan Royal Ecological Diving Centre. Visitors will also be able to access Internet sites and view videos on environmental issues.

Earth Day activities will be held in the USIS auditorium and exhibit halls and will be open to the public from 9:00 p.m.

## JPMC turns JD8.6 million net profit in 1998

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) turned a JD8.6 million net profit in 1998 despite difficult financial and economic circumstances and in the face of stiff competition in world markets, according to JPMC General Manager Sameh Madani on Saturday.

The company's total sales of phosphate last year were worth JD225 million, down from JD245 million in 1997.

The company recently reached agreement with a Pakistani company for the production of phosphate-based fertilisers, a joint venture whose headquarters will be established at the Pakistani seaport of Qasem, said Madani at a press conference.

In earlier statements, Madani said that JPMC was taking measures to boost production to eight million tonnes of phosphate by the year 2001, once the second

phase of an expansion project at the Shidiyah mines in southern Jordan is complete.

Madani addressed the press conference following a visit to the company's headoffice by Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'ad Ben Zeid, who paid tribute to the company's contributions towards the national economy.

Prince Ra'ad was briefed on the company's operations and expansion plans.

Company sources said a Jordanian-Indian joint project is now producing 220,000 tonnes of fertilisers, while a joint Jordanian-Japanese project is producing 340,000 tonnes of compound fertilisers.

According to Madani, by the end of the year 2000 Jordan's share of the world's phosphate market will reach 18 per cent.

At present JPMC's exports account for 22 per cent of the Kingdom's national exports.

## Arab bankers host meeting in Amman

AMMAN (J.T.) — The general assembly of the Federation of Arab Banks opened a meeting in Amman on Saturday to study its plans for 1999 and elect a new chairman.

The 1999 agenda includes seminars and conferences and the establishment of a company to promote tourism between Arab states.

Central Bank of Jordan Governor Ziyad Fariz, who opened the meeting on behalf of His Majesty King Abdullah, called for greater cooperation among Arab financial institutions to promote economic development in the region.

Discussions will cover modern trends in marketing and banking services and challenges facing the Arab banks at the international level.

Fariz presented a general review of Jordan's banks and their contribution to enhancing the national economy.

## What's Going On

**AMMAN INTERNATIONAL THEATRE FESTIVAL**  
Play "Das Letzte Band" (in Arabic) at the Royal Cultural Centre on Monday April 19 and Tuesday April 20 at 6:00 p.m.  
Jordanian Play "The Dictator and the Woman" at the Royal Culture Centre at 7:30 p.m.

**FILMS**  
• "The Shame" at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:30 p.m.  
• French film "Le bon plaisir" at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh on Monday April 19 at 6:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.  
• "Deep Impact" at the Books@Café, Jabal Amman at 8:30 p.m. (Tel. 4560458).

**LECTURE**  
• "The Poetry of Thomas Hardy" by Dr. Nicholas Linfield at the British Council, Jabal Amman on Monday April 19 at 5:00 p.m.

**EXHIBITIONS**  
First Computer Exhibition at Princess Sumaya University College for Technology of the Royal Scientific Society, until April 21.  
• Works by Iraqi artists entitled "Iraqi Experiments at the Jordanian Plastic Art Association, Jabal Weibdeh, until April 22 (Tel. 4623297).  
• Plastic art exhibition by Hussein Da'ssa entitled "Horizons of the Nineties" at Orient Gallery, Shmeisani, until April 20 (Tel. 56813034).  
• Works by Jordanian ceramist Mahmoud Taha at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh (Tel. 4643251/2), until May 6. Also showing an exhibition of photographs by Jordanian artist Adnan Sharif entitled "Spring at Darat Al Funun," until May 6.  
• Works by Jordanian artist Shereen Audi Kurdi at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Amman, until April 28.

## High-tech professionals lured to U.S. and Canada by better jobs and higher wages

By Dana Charkasi

AMMAN — Economic recession and political uncertainty across the region are the main incentives for Jordanian professionals to emigrate to the West, especially to Canada and the U.S., in search of better jobs and wages.

They appear to be lured by success stories scored of first and second generation relatives who emigrated to the West to escape the economic and political turbulence that followed the creation of Israel in 1948.

Jordanians from all walks of life are often heard talking about plans to emigrate to Canada and the U.S. — creating the impression that half of Amman's population is on its way out.

Most emigrants seek a more secure life, with better retirement and health insurance packages as well as free schooling for their children. Others want a second passport merely to benefit from services offered to citizens and better job opportunities.

Emigration figures provided by the U.S. and Canadian

embassies show a generally steady stream of Jordanians applying for immigration visas during the past couple of years though expressions of interest might have increased.

The number of Jordanian applicants for immigration to Canada during 1998 was 496, and 508 immigration visas were issued. The discrepancy in figures between application and actual issuing of visas stems from the fact that the immigration procedures take around one-and-a-half-year. That means the 496 applicants of 1998 will be reflected in the year 2000's figures of immigrant visas issued. Applicant figures of prior years were not available.

The U.S. embassy does not compile figures of Jordanians who failed to emigrate to the U.S.

"It is an up-and-down kind of trend. But from our perspective, there is not a sharp increase," said George Barry, first secretary at the Canadian embassy in Amman.

"Immigration visas were issued to 552 Jordanians in 1996, to 484 in 1997 and to

508 in 1998," he told the Jordan Times in a recent interview.

"Maybe the interest increased. It's possible that people are thinking about it. We certainly encounter lots of people who asked for information and explore options," he said.

"But whether they actually pursue it [emigration] or not is another thing."

Immigration figures provided by the U.S. embassy in Amman were higher.

"The numbers of immigrant visas issued in Jordan for the United States of America were 3,683 in 1996, 3,620 in 1997 and 2,922 in 1998," said a U.S. embassy spokesman.

"Over 28 per cent of these immigration visas were issued to Iraqi nationals," he told the Jordan Times.

"Most of the visas issued were family reunion visas and only three per cent were employment immigrant visas."

Popular perceptions that more Jordanians are leaving the homeland to start a new life in Canada, often perceived as a safer country than the U.S., are fed by the

fact that the relatively young country is in need of qualified personnel.

Accordingly, the majority of immigrants are high-tech professionals holding degrees in computer programming, graphics and animation, software developers and engineers specialised in civil, mechanical and electronic fields.

"Canada is a fairly big country with a diverse labour market and it really depends on where you are going," said Barry.

"We do hope and expect that whenever somebody is interested in going, they will check things out and research as much as they can where they can go in order to find a job."

Surfing the Internet under the keyword "Canada Immigration," or "U.S. Immigration," one can find all kinds of useful information, beginning from job offers to real estate bargains — magic words for emigrants.

One-third of Jordan's 4.6 million population lives below the poverty line while unemployment is officially estimated at 16 per cent and independently at up to 27

per cent.

After years of persistent denial, the government recently acknowledged that the country suffers from economic recession, registering a modest growth of less than one per cent last year.

"Competition is very high and the market is small," said Abu Tareq, a U.S.-educated Jordanian in his late 30s who has applied to emigrate to Canada.

In addition to persistent economic challenges in a country with a limited market and scarce natural resources, the sudden death of His Majesty King Hussein on Feb. 7 after a 47-year rule, raised some uncertainty.

The transition of power has been smooth — King Abdullah ascended the Throne after the death of his father — but the country continues to show sensitivity to regional politics.

"People are currently passing through a stage of disbelief after the death of King Hussein. They are waiting to see what will happen, and no one is producing or acting," said Abu Tareq, a father of

two, who did not want to give his full name.

"But a market cannot exist of people waiting."

"Jordan has always been a country where any crisis immediately affects the economy. We cannot take these recurrent ups and downs anymore," said Umm Tareq, who admitted that she and her husband had considered emigrating to Canada after news of King Hussein's second bout with cancer was announced last summer.

"We always feel nervous about what the next year will bring. We cannot plan long-term projects since we don't have a feeling of security."

"We are planning to establish a business [in Canada] to have a second leg in case something happens in Jordan," said Umm Tareq, echoing commonly held views among emigrants.

However, many emigrants often abuse loopholes in the Canadian immigration system to glean all possible benefits without living there, such as free medical treatment.

Khulud, a mother of three

who also requested anonymity, said her family would not sell all their property in Jordan if their emigration application went through. "We will keep our company running," she said.

"We just want to land in Canada to officially mark our residence" but will leave via the U.S. as a traveller not to get the passport stamped to prove that we exited Canada," she said. "Officially we will be in Canada and unofficially, we will be living in Amman," she added.

"Such people are only interested in getting the passport to enjoy privileges that Canadian citizenship such as free medical treatment," said Umm Tareq.

Others want a Canadian passport only to work in the U.S., since Canadians are not required to acquire a work permit to work there. Many believe this allows them to earn more money.

"Wages in America are higher than in Canada," said Maria Zeid, when asked why she and her husband chose to emigrate to the U.S.

Increasing costs of education and a general lack of trust in the Kingdom's

health and retirement systems are other reasons often cited by emigrants for leaving.

"In Canada, public schools — contrary to most schools here — offer excellent standards of education. There, you can send your children to public schools. In Jordan anybody who can afford it, sends his children to a private school in order to provide them with the best possible education," said Abu Abdullah, another emigrant hopeful.

Barry said Canadian authorities, aware of the reported abuse by some immigrants, were planning to enact a new citizenship law by the end of 1999, to close potential loopholes.

Immigrants have to reside a minimum of three years in Canada and to demonstrate profound knowledge about Canada to gain citizenship.

"All immigration aspirants have to go through interviews, and we can see if they are serious and if they have informed themselves," he added. "It surprises us sometimes that people seem to not really have thought about it well."



## Armed militia rampage in Timor, 30 feared dead

DILI, East Timor (AFP) — Armed militia rampaged through the East Timor capital Dili on Saturday, attacking pro-independence supporters in a killing and looting spree that left up to 30 people dead.

Witnesses said around 1,500 pro-Indonesia militiamen drove around the city's deserted streets in a convoy of trucks firing weapons and burning the houses of known independence activists.

Residents said the bodies of more than 20 people could be seen strewn on the lawn of pro-independence figure Manuel Carrascalao's house, and four others could be seen in a neighbouring garden.

"Reports reaching me from Dili said that about 30 people have already died so far," said Mario Carrascalao, a former East Timor governor and now a member of Indonesia's Supreme Advisory Council, speaking from Jakarta.

Carrascalao, whose brother Manuel's house was the scene of a reported massacre, said he was receiving hourly reports from Dili during the reign of terror by the militias.

Mario said the death toll could rise as scores of refugees sheltering in his brother's house had been taken away by the militias.

"They took up everyone from the house and brought them to an unknown location. This is the usual

method when they want to get rid of people without leaving any evidence," Mario said.

Manuel's teenage son, Manuelito, was killed in the attack, his family said.

An AFP reporter witnessed the attack on Manuel Carrascalao's house, which was packed with some 150 refugees.

He said the assault began with stones before the militia advanced into the front garden and reception room, shooting and smashing down doors.

The refugees, who had been camping in the back garden, were trapped by the high walls and around 30 lay crying in fear on the floor of a back dining room.

No troops or police were in sight and there was no attempt to stop the attack on the house, which is close to the governor's office, he said.

The AFP reporter and a French radio reporter were hit and threatened at gunpoint by the militia, before one of the militia leaders bundled them into a car and sent them back to their hotel.

A second group of militia armed with wooden poles entered the hotel and demanded the journalists hand over the film from their cameras.

Manuel was at the time meeting with Nobel laureate Bishop Carlos Ximenes Felipe Belo and Irish Foreign Minister David



East Timorese pro-Jakarta militiamen brandish home-made weapons including rifles during a show-of-force rally April 17 in Dili. About 1,000 militiamen vowed to make their increasingly-violent homeland a part of Indonesia, which annexed East Timor in a move not recognised by the United Nations (Reuters photo)

Andrews at Belo's house some 300 metres away. Andrews later flew out of the city for Bali, a journalist said.

An official at a clinic in Dili said seven people had been brought into the building with gunshot wounds. One, a 58-year-old man shot in the chest as he stepped down from a bus, died later.

The militia also burned down the house of Leandro Isaac, the leader of the National Council of Resistance of East Timor (CNRT), an umbrella group for the pro-independence movement, as well as the house of a dead activist.

They also ransacked the offices of the Suara Timor

Timor (the Voice of East Timor) daily and a human rights office.

Troops and police were nowhere to be seen on the streets during the rampage, which the Indonesian state news agency Antara described as a "cleaning operation".

Indonesian army Colonel Tono Suratman said violence erupted in "clashes between returning militia and pro-independence groups," who he said had ambushed the militia.

"So far eight people have died from both sides," Suratman, chief of the East Timor military command, told AFP by phone.

It was the worst violence in East Timor since the

Liquisa massacre on April 6, when the pro-Indonesian militia gunned down refugees in a churchyard west of Dili. The military said seven died while human rights bodies put the death toll at more than 50.

Saturday began with a show of force by the pro-Indonesian militias who paraded through the city in the morning.

Eurico Guterres, the leader of the Aitarak (Thorn) militia, told the parade his group was launching a purge to weed out pro-independence supporters from the administration.

"Today, we are going to each government office. We will rid them of civil ser-

vants who are against Indonesia," he said.

The militias, who oppose any attempt by the former Portuguese colony to break away from Indonesian rule, distributed threatening leaflets carrying a list of people to be beaten and outlining steps to crush pro-independence sentiment.

Indonesia, which invaded East Timor in 1975 and annexed it a year later, said in January it would offer the territory independence if its people reject autonomy proposals.

The rising violence has however threatened a planned U.N.-supervised ballot on autonomy tentatively scheduled for July.

## Rebels kill dozens in western Uganda

KAMPALA (AP) — Rebels fighting to oust Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni have killed 37 people in the past week, 14 of them in attacks in the past two days, newspaper reports said Saturday.

The attacks have disrupted the shipment of relief food to between 50,000 and 70,000 Ugandans displaced by months of violence.

The U.N. World Food Programme (WFP) said Saturday it had resumed transporting food to the region early this week after temporarily suspending convoys due to the insecurity.

"We have been forced to arrange military escorts to accompany our food convoys to ensure that transporters can travel safely, and the food reaches those who need it," WFP Uganda director Michael Jones said in a statement.

Rebels of the allied democratic front killed at least 14 people in two separate attacks Thursday and Friday in western Uganda after they crossed over from bases in Eastern Congo, the independent Monitor newspaper reported. It said the rebels have killed 37 people in the past week.

The ADF operates in the

dense forests of the Rwenzori mountains that straddle the border between Congo and Uganda, and rebels often launch cross-border attacks disrupt Museveni's government.

The government-owned new vision newspaper said Saturday the two attacks and a smaller one in the same area had claimed 27 lives since Thursday. New vision said nine people were killed late Friday when rebels struck the village of Bubombi on the outskirts of the western frontier town of Bundibugyo, 386 kilometres west of the capital Kampala.

Ten villagers were also killed on Thursday at Nyakigumba, near the town of Fort Portal, the report said.

Officials could not be reached to clarify the death toll.

The new vision said security and military officials visited the Fort Portal region Friday and promised to deploy more troops.

The World Food Programme said it sent 70 tonnes of food supplies to Bundibugyo earlier this week for 30,000 people displaced by rebel attacks. It said two-thirds of a total of 200 metric tonnes of maize, beans oil and corn-soya blend targeted for the region had now been delivered.

## Fragments of Korean Air crash plane's black box cover found

SHANGHAI (AFP) — Parts of the cover of the black box belonging to the Korean Air cargo plane which crashed near here on Thursday have been found, a Korean Air official said Saturday.

However, extensive searches by Chinese soldiers combing the site have so far failed to turn up the flight data recorder located in the black box, the official told AFP.

"Parts of the black box cover were found today but the rest of the body of the black box has not been found," he said.

"They (black boxes) can stand high temperatures and high impact," said the official who declined to speculate on why only parts of the cover were found.

The crash on Thursday afternoon at Minhang, 12 kilometres from Shanghai's Hongqiao airport, killed the three Korean Air crew and six Chinese people on the ground. Thirty-six other Chinese people on the ground were injured.

A Chinese civil aviation

official had earlier said the black boxes may have been stolen.

"The black boxes may have been taken away by villagers who took parts of the plane and stole some of its spilled cargo," said the official who requested anonymity.

Residents in the area had swooped on costume jewellery the plane was carrying, along with a cargo of mushrooms and computer parts, he told reporters at the crash site.

However, a Korean Air official in Shanghai disputed this.

"I don't think that the black box has been stolen. The debris was scattered over a wide area. We are still trying to find it," he said on Saturday.

Information on the data recorders could help determine the cause of the crash which South Korean officials said Friday was caused by an on-board explosion. Chinese officials said there was no evidence of this.

"The site is showered

with fragments of textiles scattered over an area with a one kilometre diameter. It was just like a big explosion," said the Korean Air official.

"Two body parts have been found but they must go through DNA testing. We don't know if they are from the same body or not," he added.

The body parts are believed to belong to the Korean crew whose families have arrived in Minhang, the official said.

South Korean and Chinese investigators at the site have found the altitude indicator, which showed the cargo jet had reached 1,000 metres when it started descending at a 30 degree angle.

This means that the plane, which was climbing to a higher altitude after taking off, suddenly started falling after reaching a height of 1,000 metres," a South Korean transport ministry official said.

A Korean Air spokesman said it would be premature to discuss the cause before

the black-box flight data recorders were found.

China asserted its right to conduct the investigation into the cause of the crash.

"Under international aviation law, since the crash occurred on Chinese territory, China has the right to conduct the investigation into the cause. However, since the airline is South Korean and the aircraft is made by a U.S. manufacturer, we have allowed the two countries to send their people here," a Shanghai foreign affairs office spokesman said.

Five South Korean aviation experts are in China and U.S. aircraft maker McDonnell-Douglas has also sent officials, he added.

China will seek compensation for the six Chinese people killed by falling debris, the spokesman said.

"There is a compensation issue involving the people who were killed by falling debris on the ground. The Chinese government has the responsibility of obtaining compensation for them," he said.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Russia looks to patch up relations during Pakistani leader's visit

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia plans to use an upcoming visit by Pakistan's prime minister to improve tense relations between the two countries, an official said Saturday. "Relations between the USSR and now Russia and Pakistan have not been brilliant, to put it diplomatically," Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin told the Interfax news agency. Karasin said the visit by Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on April 19 could have a "normalising and reviving" effect on the two countries' relations. Sharif was expected to meet with top Russian officials to sign various economic cooperation agreements during his three-day visit, foreign ministry officials have said. It will be the first visit of a Pakistani prime minister to Russia in 25 years. The two countries' relations have long been tense because of Russia's close military and economic ties with India, Pakistan's rival. Relations were also soured by the Soviet Union's invasion of Afghanistan in the 1980s. Karasin said that though it wants to improve relations with Pakistan, it would not forget its close friendship with India. "India and China, naturally, remain the main priorities in our policy" in the Asia-Pacific region, he said. Sharif was also expected to discuss recent test launches of nuclear-capable missiles by both India and Pakistan. Russia expressed concern about the launches, saying they could lead to a new arms race in Asia.

### Malaysian FM leaves Thailand after trip overshadowed by Anwar

BANGKOK (AFP) — Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar left Thailand Saturday at the end of a visit overshadowed by the jailing back home of former Deputy Premier Anwar Ibrahim. Syed Hamid, who took up his post in January, left for Kuala Lumpur after a three-day stay aimed largely at familiarising himself with his Thai counterpart, officials here said. He met Friday with Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai and Foreign Minister Surin Pitsuwan. "There was no discussion of the Anwar issue. Thailand has already expressed its attitude towards this matter," government spokesman Akapol Sorasuchart said earlier. Thailand has said the issue is Malaysia's internal affair, sticking to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) line by declining to comment on the domestic affairs of member states. Anwar was Wednesday sentenced to six years jail on corruption charges after a bitter feud with Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, resulting in a hail of international criticism. Questioned by journalists, Syed Hamid defended the ruling on Anwar as "transparent" and "accountable" and not a violation of human rights, the Nation daily reported Saturday. "It is not a kangaroo court. It was subject to media coverage with local and international media," he said. "We offer no apologies for what we have done so long as within our system, within our law, we have given the individual the opportunity to be heard." He also dismissed criticism that Anwar's jailing might affect ASEAN unity, but acknowledged some of its members may hold reservations over the ruling. "Individually we may have our own inclinations and views, but inclinations will not override the overall interest of ASEAN," ASEAN groups Brunei, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

### Obasanjo arrives in Accra

ACCRA (AFP) — Nigeria's civilian president-elect Olusegun Obasanjo on Saturday arrived for a one-day visit to Ghana, where he was met at Accra's airport by Foreign Minister Victor Gbeho. A foreign ministry source said that the retired general Obasanjo would hold talks with President Jerry Rawlings and meet members of the Nigerian community living in Ghana, as well as a delegation of local Ga chiefs. Obasanjo is due to take office on May 29 after more than 15 years of military rule.

### Italy protests to Belgrade over journalist incident

ROME (R) — Italy on Saturday protested to Belgrade over the treatment of an Italian television journalist who said she was detained, threatened and interrogated for 10 hours before being expelled from Yugoslavia. The foreign ministry said it had summoned Yugoslavia's ambassador to Italy to lodge a protest and ordered its embassy in Belgrade to make similar representations to the Yugoslav government. Lucia Annunziata, who was working for state television's second channel, said she was hooded, handcuffed to a radiator and kept on the floor for 10 hours before being declared "persona non grata" and expelled earlier this week. She and a companion, an Italian businessman, were stopped at the border between Yugoslavia and Croatia as they were planning to leave the country. They were taken to an undisclosed location outside Belgrade where she said the interrogation and intimidation took place by plainclothes men. She said she was asked about her work, her opinion of Italian Foreign Minister Lamberto Dini, her political contacts and her knowledge of Italy's secret services and Italian embassies in Yugoslavia and neighbouring Macedonia. The foreign ministry said Belgrade was told that such intimidating behaviour against journalists was inadmissible and that Annunziata was owed an apology.

### Britain's Monet show to stay open for 34 hours non-stop

LONDON (AFP) — An exhibition of the works of French impressionist Claude Monet will stay open for 34 hours non-stop before closing on Sunday in a bid to accommodate public interest, organisers said. London's Royal Academy hopes the ground-breaking move will allow an extra 8,000 people to see the exhibition "Monet in the 20th Century" which has provoked exceptional interest despite a high entry price of £9 (12.5 euros, \$13.7) for adults. "We think it is an historic event, which reflects the 24-hour society we live in and is providing people who haven't yet seen the exhibition with an opportunity to do so," said a Royal Academy spokesman. Around 8,200 people have admired the 80 works by the artist, who died in 1926, since the show opened in January.

### 3 dead, 40 injured in bus accident

HELSINKI, Finland (AP) — Three people were killed and some 40 injured when a charter bus carrying members of a Russian Orthodox congregation to a monastery drove into a ravine Saturday in southern Finland, police said. The bus ploughed through a fence along a highway near Heinola, 135 kilometres north of Helsinki, and then plunged down a 10-metre ravine. Police were investigating the cause of the accident. The passengers were on their way to spend the weekend at the monastery in eastern Finland.

## Serbs ready to resist NATO troops, general says

BELGRADE (R) — A Serb general commanding forces in Kosovo said on Saturday he could muster 150,000 armed Serbs to fight and win against any NATO ground intervention in the province.

"Our people are strong enough to endure all these pressures and aggression on our country and to come out as a winner," General Nebojsa Pavkovic, commander of the Yugoslav Third Army, said in a report carried by the state news agency Tanjug.

"In the territory of Kosovo (and Metohija) there are now over 150,000 people under arms. If every third gun hit its target, that will be the price the aggressor will pay if he tries to come to our country," Pavkovic said.

"No foreign soldiers will come to this territory without

large losses," he added.

NATO, which is into the fourth week of air bombardments to end Serb oppression of the southern Serb province's ethnic Albanian majority, denies any plan to commit ground troops.

But there is increasing talk in diplomatic and military circles of the possibility of a ground war as hundreds of thousands of ethnic Albanians flee the province. Serbia says they are fleeing NATO bombs but the refugees and the West say they have been brutally expelled.

Pavkovic, in the Tanjug report, said the effects of NATO bombing that began on March 24 have been "practically negligible" on Yugoslavia's ability to wage war.

In an account wildly at odds with those issued by NATO, he

said his army alone had downed 16 NATO planes, five helicopters, 46 cruise missiles and four unmanned aircraft.

NATO has admitted losing one fighter plane, an F-117A Stealth fighter, shot down early in the air war.

"I look at the effects in terms of aims NATO has reached in this territory — one of them being to support the ethnic Albanian terrorist forces and to provoke a mass armed rebellion in the area of Kosovo," Pavkovic said, referring to the separatist Kosovo Liberation Army which is fighting an armed campaign for Kosovo's independence.

"This aim was not realised at all and in the first days of the aggression on our country the aggressors virtually put themselves in the function of support to the ethnic Albanian ter-

rorists," he said.

Tanjug also reported that NATO missile strikes had forced large numbers of ethnic Albanian civilians to flee their homes in Gjilane, Vitina and Kosovska-Kamenica in the east of the province.

"Some civilian buildings and houses in the ethnic Albanian part of the village Silovo, in Priepnica, Malesevo and other villages of the Gjilane municipality have been hit and totally destroyed and the population is fleeing the NATO projectiles in long refugee columns," Tanjug said.

It was just such a column that Serbs say NATO warplanes bombed repeatedly on Wednesday, killing more than 60 ethnic Albanians.

NATO has yet to fully explain the circumstances of the bombing.

## Can't remember that song title? Tune in to the net

WELLINGTON (R) — Help is at hand for anyone who has ever gone crazy trying to remember the name of a tune buzzing around their head.

Computer scientists at the University of Waikato in New Zealand have developed an Internet-based system that will name that tune after you sing a few notes into a personal computer.

"Users can literally sing a few bars and have all melodies containing that sequence of notes retrieved and displayed," the scientists report on the University's digital library website.

"You can listen to the

melodies, view them in musical notation and download them in a variety of popular formats."

The Melody Index (or Meldex) service is currently in development and limited to 9,400 folk songs from around the world. But the New Zealand researchers said digital storage and music recognition technology such as theirs was the way of the future — to the undoubted relief of music shop assistants asked for the name of a song based on a few tuneless sung notes.

The Meldex website can be reached at [www.nzdl.org](http://www.nzdl.org) by following the music library link.

مكتبة صوتية إلكترونية





Malaysian riot police use water cannon to disperse demonstrators supporting sacked and jailed Malaysian Finance Minister Anwar Ibrahim in Kuala Lumpur April 17. Police on Saturday blasted protesters and shoppers alike with the water cannon on the fourth day of street demonstrations in support of Anwar (Reuters photo)

## Protests rage into the night in Malaysian capital

KUALA LUMPUR (AFP)

Protesters carried on into the night in a Muslim district here Saturday as police used water cannon against supporters of jailed former Deputy Premier Anwar Ibrahim.

Stinging jets of chemical-laced water broke up a street protest in the politically sensitive district of Kampung Bahru, a hotbed of opposition to Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, but demonstrators defiantly regrouped.

The acrid odour of the chemicals drifted through the streets and alleys of the densely populated area.

The unrest coincided with the start of the Islamic year in the Muslim-majority nation, which has been hit by protests since Anwar was sacked and arrested in

September after a feud with Mahathir.

"Down, down Mahathir," the protesters chanted, taunting police and paramilitary forces with shouts of their battle cry "reformasi".

At one point some 200 demonstrators hurled rocks at police outside a mosque in Kampung Bahru before being turned back by bursts of water.

Anwar was sentenced to six years in jail on four charges of corruption Wednesday, triggering daily protests and scattered clashes with police.

He insists he was the victim of a political conspiracy. Earlier Saturday, police detained 58 people at another mosque in the city centre, the Bernama news agency said. Some of the suspects rounded up appeared to

have been identified from photographs of previous rallies.

Bernama quoted Kuala Lumpur police chief Kamarudin Mohamed Ali as saying his men seized petrol, stones, knuckledusters, two slingshots, a bag of marbles, a Molotov cocktail and a pair of scissors from the suspects.

But the crackdown failed to avert a march by some 500 people who called for the resignation of Mahathir, whose sacking of Anwar turned him into a rallying figure for anti-government groups.

"We the students of Malaysia are fed up and sick of Mahathir," a student leader said at the march.

"We want to show the world that Malaysians are able to bring about changes

toward a more democratic country, not a country ruled by a handful of Mahathir cronies," he added.

The demonstrators moved toward a shopping district where police used water cannon to break up the crowd.

Malls and boutiques were shut down as jets of water were sprayed at demonstrators and onlookers, including several foreign tourists.

Mahathir, who is recuperating after spending 10 days in the national heart centre with a lung infection, called Saturday for unity among Malaysians in a special New Year message.

"The country will collapse if the people are disunited and concerned only with self-interest," he was quoted as saying by Bernama in a special New Year message.

## Pakistan says India's political turmoil an internal affair

ISLAMABAD (AP)

Following the collapse of India's Hindu nationalist government Saturday, Pakistan said it remained committed to negotiations with its uneasy neighbour regardless of who is in power.

Saturday's confidence vote that brought down Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's government "was an internal affair of India's," said a Pakistani foreign ministry statement.

However, the statement

added that "Pakistan desires political stability in the region." But regardless of who is in power, the foreign ministry said "Pakistan will pursue the dialogue process with India irrespective of the nature of the government in New Delhi."

Relations between Pakistan and India have not been easy since the Asian subcontinent gained its independence from Britain in 1947.

But last year when the two neighbours exploded

underground nuclear devices their relationship became a matter of international concern.

Combatants in three wars since 1947, many world leaders feared a fourth confrontation between India and Pakistan could quickly escalate into a nuclear war.

This week the two countries exacerbated tensions by conducting tit-for-tat tests of ballistic missiles capable of carrying nuclear and conventional warheads. In February Vajpayee

made a historic bus trip to Pakistan's eastern Punjab capital of Lahore to meet his counterpart Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif.

The two men signed the Lahore Declaration promising to try to settle their outstanding issues throughout negotiations.

The most contentious issue is the disputed region of Kashmir, which has been the flash point of two of the three wars between India and Pakistan. Kashmir was split between the two coun-

tries and both Pakistan and India lay claim to a united Kashmir.

"Pakistan remains committed to the implementation of the Lahore Declaration in letter and spirit," said the foreign ministry statement.

"It is only through dialogue that outstanding problems, including the core issue of Jammu and Kashmir can be resolved and peace and security strengthened in the region," the statement said.

## Pakistani police on alert amid strike over Bhutto's conviction

KARACHI (AFP)

Pakistani police and paramilitary troops were on high alert on Saturday as a strike called by former Premier Benazir Bhutto's party to protest her conviction on corruption charges hit a string of towns in her home province, witnesses said.

Residents said the entire interior of Sindh province, including Bhutto's hometown Larkana, were paralysed by the strike, held in defiance of a ban imposed last October when the government slapped direct federal rule on the province to curb a rising tide of violence.

Reports said activists from Bhutto's Pakistan People's Party (PPP) blocked main roads at several places in the interior, burning tyres and hurling bricks and stones, disrupting traffic on main roads.

In the urban centres of Sukkur and Hyderabad, members of the region's native Sindhi-speaking majority community responded to the call.

Party officials said police baton-charged a protest rally in the town of Nawabshah and detained federal Senator Gbulam Qadir Chandio along with more than a dozen others.

In the southern province's capital of Karachi, Pakistan's largest city and a strong-

hold of ethnic Mohajir Qaumi Movement, shops were closed only in Lyari district, inhabited mainly by PPP supporters, where dozens of women rallied in protest.

Some women tried to block a rail track in the suburbs of Karachi but police removed them, witnesses said.

PPP provincial president Nisar Khoro said 200 party workers had been detained in the province, but a senior police official put the figure at only two dozen.

Thousands of police and paramilitary troops were deployed across the province following warnings by the provincial government which said the call for a day-long strike by the PPP was unjustified.

The party enjoys strong electoral support in Sindh's interior which is dominated by the native Sindhi-speaking community.

Provincial governor Moinuddeen Haider said Friday that state machinery would be used to prevent the strike.

Residents said security forces in armoured vehicles patrolled streets in tense areas.

Several protest rallies have been held since a court Thursday sentenced Bhutto and her husband Asif Ali Zardari to five years in jail and barred

them from holding public office. The court ordered the confiscation of the couple's property and fined them \$8.6 million after convicting them of accepting kickbacks in a contract awarded to a Swiss firm in 1994.

Lawmakers belonging to the PPP have threatened to quit the federal parliament and provincial assemblies if Bhutto is barred from politics, party officials said.

The central executive committee of the party has met in Islamabad to plan a response to the conviction, which will include country-wide demonstrations next week, they said.

Bhutto, who is in London, has slammed her conviction as a miscarriage of justice and accused the government of dragging the country towards dictatorship.

Her husband is already in jail on other criminal charges. She said she would return home and file an appeal to the supreme court.

In another statement, released here by her party, Bhutto denounced what she called the "brutal" police action against PPP workers, particularly in Sindh.

"I was shocked and strongly condemn the arrest of senator Chandio and use of force against peaceful demonstrators," the opposition leader said.

## 'Chinese police arrest journalist'

BEIJING (AFP)

Chinese police arrested a journalist and subjected a dissident to a severe beating in separate incidents, a source close to pro-democracy groups said Saturday.

Journalist Ma Xiaoming was arrested on Thursday in northern China's Shaanxi province while he was covering a protest by farmers complaining against their tax burden, the New York-based Human Rights in China (HRIC) said in a statement sent to AFP here.

Ma, 45, who worked for a provincial television network, was held in the Zizhou area.

"The farmers have become incensed over his arrest and have demanded that the authorities release him," the HRIC statement said.

But the television network officials, contacted by telephone, said they were unaware whether Ma had been set free.

HRIC said Ma renounced his communist party membership last year in protest at a previous arrest for having given an interview to the Voice of America (VOA) during President Bill Clinton's China visit last June.

China routinely jails VOA

broadcasters.

Meanwhile, pro-democracy activist Li Guotao was "beaten severely" by several policemen Thursday during a four-hour interrogation in Hongko police station, paroled political prisoner Yao Zhenxiang told AFP.

Li was arrested when he went to Yao's home in order to express his condolences over the death of Yao's mother the previous day.

The U.S.-based Free China Movement said about 10 people were briefly held during that incident.

Yao's mother died on Wednesday less than an hour after she met her son who had been given permission to visit his ailing mother. The family has accused police of having precipitated her collapse through their treatment of Yao.

After his mother's death, Yao was allowed to stay with his family until the funeral. He is obliged to return to the Dafeng work camp to complete his three year "reform through labour" term.

Li is a member of the underground China Democratic Party, many of whose top leaders were handed long prison terms last year.

## Taleban claim territorial gain in northern Afghanistan

KABUL (AFP)

Afghanistan's Taleban militia has gained ground at Khenjan in the northern province of Baghlan after an opposition commander switched sides, Information Minister Mulla Amir Khan Muttaqi said Saturday.

Muttaqi dismissed reports of heavy fighting in the area Friday, saying the "surrender" of opposition commander Sayed Mirza along with 130 of his men and three tanks caused a collapse of the rival defence line.

The Pakistan-based information service, Afghan Islamic Press, had reported a "large-scale" offensive by the Islamic militia at Khenjan, supported by aerial bombardment.

Muttaqi said the Taleban had taken the area between

Khenjan and Andrab districts of Baghlan.

"The enemy belt has been captured by the forces of the Islamic Emirate and the enemy has retreated towards Andrab," Muttaqi said.

He said forces loyal to commander Ahmad Shah Masood had not counter-attacked.

But sources close to Masood told AFP from the nearby Panjshir valley by satellite telephone that the ruling militia gained territory Friday and frontline "changes" had occurred around Khenjan. But they claimed the lost territory had been retaken by the opposition the same day.

Khenjan sits on the main highway linking Kabul to northern Afghanistan through the Salang tunnel

cutting through the Hindu Kush mountains. Andrab guards the approach to Masood's stronghold of Panjshir valley.

The Taleban controls about 80 per cent of Afghanistan. Masood is the last obstacle to its ambition of controlling the whole country.

The frontlines had been relatively quiet over the past four months after the Taleban swept wide swathes in northern and central Afghanistan in last year.

The U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Karl Inderfurth said on Wednesday that the Taleban were bracing for a major offensive against the opposition.

Muttaqi declined comment on the statement.

## Taleban slam Clinton's criticism of their treatment of women

KABUL (AP)

The Taleban religious militia slammed U.S. President Bill Clinton Saturday for his attacks on the Taleban's human rights record and in particular their treatment of women.

They also warned the U.S. president that his criticism only serves to damage relations between the United States and Afghanistan.

"This criticism will only be bad for relations between Afghanistan and the United States," said a foreign ministry statement.

Clinton has been a strong critic of the Taleban's treatment of women.

But the Taleban said "any criticism regarding Afghanistan's Muslims and women's rights should come from a Muslim." That excludes Clinton, said the foreign ministry statement.

This Clinton is not a Muslim and does not know anything about Islam and Muslims... who is he to order the Afghan nation to change its Islamic principles regarding the women's right and Islam?" the statement asked.

Since taking control of the Afghan capital of Kabul

in September 1996, the Taleban have forced women off the job, closed schools for girls and forced women to wear the all-enveloping burqa, which hides them from head to toe. They see through a mesh opening that covers their eyes.

Also women in the 90 per cent of Afghanistan ruled by the Taleban are required to travel outside their home with a male relative. They are publicly beaten for fraternising with a man other than a relative.

Taxi drivers often are beaten for transporting women unaccompanied by a male relative. A married woman found in the company of a man other than a relative or husband can be stoned to death.

The Taleban's foreign ministry statement also argued that women were safer today in Kabul than during the rule of former president Burhanuddin Rabbani, who was ousted by the Taleban in 1996.

During Rabbani's four years in office there was a bitter civil war with rival Islamic parties that devastated about 70 per cent of Kabul and killed 50,000 people, most of them civil-

ians and many of them women and children.

Rabbani and his military chief Ahmed Shah Massood now head the northern-based opposition which is waging a bitter battle with the Taleban. The opposition rules about 10 per cent of Afghanistan.

The Taleban's foreign ministry said Clinton spoke out against the Taleban's treatment of women to appease American women and to capture the women's vote in the United States.

Under strict Taleban rules women would not be allowed to vote.

Even Afghanistan's opposition includes several parties who also are vehemently opposed to women voting in a general election. Many also are strong supporters of women wearing a burqa.

"The women of America have a strong hold on elections in the United States and Clinton wants to win over women's opinion to his advantage," said the Taleban's statement.

"Both Afghanistan and the United States has its separate social background... and each country should respect the culture of the other's country."

## Taiwan politicians in election warmup

TAIPEI (AP)

Political heavyweights turned out for an annual Taoist procession Saturday in a warmup for next March's presidential elections that demonstrates the strong link between religion and populist politics in Taiwan.

Vice President Lien Chan, the guest of honour at the ceremony, placed three carved images of the goddess Matsu inside an ornate Palanquin at the Taoist Chenlanlung Temple in the town of Taichia, about 130 kilometres south of Taipei.

Flanked by local politicians from the ruling nationalist party, Lien used the Taiwanese dialect to ask for the goddess' blessing on the gathering and presented incense before the 200-year-old temple's altar.

The appearance by Lien, considered President Lee Teng-Hui's preferred successor, comes amid efforts by the nationalists to reform his pious image.

Banqueting, toasting and visiting temples are key ways for

Taiwanese politicians to prove their credentials as populists, and Tachia's Matsu procession is considered one of the most important events on the religious calendar.

Lien was followed at the temple by potential rival James Soong, a former top local politician who outscored Lien in most public opinion surveys but is unpopular with the nationalist leadership.

Beginning at midnight Saturday, the Tachia Matsu procession will follow the Matsu images along a 280 kilometre route through the central Taiwan agricultural plain over eight days and seven nights. Tens of thousands of believers line the procession way, praying to the goddess to bring them health and good fortune over the months that follow.

The cult of Matsu, a goddess of mercy worshipped originally by fishermen, has thrived throughout Taiwan since being brought from southern China's Fujian province by immigrants beginning about 400 years ago.



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## Helping Arafat

THE LETTER that President Bill Clinton is expected to send to Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat "making the most explicit recognition of an independent Palestinian state," as reported from Washington, will make a postponement of the declaration of a state on May 4 much easier for Palestinian leaders.

The Palestinians are still divided on the issue with some, like the Speaker of the Palestinian Assembly Ahmad Qouriea, calling for a unilateral declaration of the state on that date, while others are advocating restraint for fear of rocking the boat on the eve of the Israeli general elections on May 17. The supporters of the May 4 deadline fear that any postponement will only compromise the credibility of the Palestinian leadership and offer the Israelis additional time to tighten their grip on Palestinian lands.

The Palestinian leader has been campaigning for a clear U.S. position on the right of the Palestinians to a state of their own on their own soil. Unless Arafat gets such assurances from Washington, as he did from the Europeans, he prefers to keep the world guessing about his next move. The U.S. letter on this issue, however, is not expected to go far enough in spelling out an unequivocal endorsement of the Palestinian's right to their own independent and sovereign country.

However, the president's anticipated letter can still be strong in substance. It would be enough at the moment to recognise the Palestinian's right to self-determination, because that in effect amounts to recognition of their right to establish their own independent state. Self-determination throughout the annals of history, especially within the context of contemporary international law and jurisprudence, means nothing less than the right of peoples to create their own independent state. Besides, the right to self-determination is an inalienable right under international norms that President Clinton will have only to reaffirm and reiterate in his letter. All the world, including the majority of Israeli citizens, recognise that the establishment of the Palestinian state is an inevitability.

Palestinians have many reasons to delay the declaration of a state. It would be more prudent for them to wait because the state's borders, water rights, and the status of east Jerusalem have yet to be negotiated and agreed upon. Any precipitous declaration of a state whose geographic nature has yet to be determined would be fraught with all sorts of diplomatic and political problems not to mention the security related issues. Besides, the bets are in favour of a change of leadership in Israel in May. Without such a change, the Palestinians would not stand a chance of successfully obtaining their rights. It is worthwhile waiting until the end of this year before they proceed to exercise their natural and inalienable right to independence.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Dustour's Ahmad Syam said the government's newly announced emergency plan to handle a possible water shortage this summer indicates the real crisis relies on how to properly manage water resources. Clear evidence for this is the government's moves to exploit the Zai Water Treatment Plant's full capacity, drill and operate new resources as well as take control of privately-owned wells, if necessary, said Syam. The writer said that the water problem is no longer an "ordinary summer issue", as Jordan, just like other Arab countries, faces a real depletion in its water reserves and non-renewable resources—a factor that will negatively reflect on per capita water consumption. Syam quoted World Bank statistics as reporting that the 1990 per capita consumption in Jordan was 224 cubic metres, while per capita consumption in 2025 is expected to be 91 cubic metres. The writer urged the Kingdom and all Arab countries to draw up a strategy to deal with future situation, which requires water rationing, new irrigation methods, water desalination and controlling water leaks.

Al Dustour's Abdul Illah Abu Ayyash said the 60 per cent increase in oil prices in recent weeks was a result of measures taken by oil producers, reducing their production to strike a balance between demand and supply in the international market. The improvement of oil prices will reinvigorate the Gulf states' economies, which have been suffering a recession in oil returns, budget deficits and investment problems, said Abu Ayyash. Because these economies undoubtedly affect Jordan, their improvements will reflect positively on the Kingdom as the increase in oil returns will expand expenditures on projects in these states, and this will result in increased imports from neighbouring countries. Also, said the writer, His Majesty King Abdullah's policies with all Arab countries including the Gulf states, will strengthen Jordan's economic opportunities. This economic "optimism" requires certain preparation by the public and private sectors to sufficiently handle any developments in the Gulf states' economic situations, the writer concluded.

# Negative growth or slow down?

## Sunday's Economic Pulse



Dr. Fahed Fanek

ACCORDING TO current official estimates, the Jordanian economy was growing during the past three years 1996-1998 at the rates of 0.8, 1.3, and 2.2 per cent respectively. Since these figures are tentative, or rough estimates subject to change, it is safer to assume that the Jordanian economy is currently stagnating at near zero growth.

Jawad Al Anani introduced the expression "slow down" to describe the state of the economy during the past three years. However, Prime Minister Abdur-Ra'uf S. Rawabdeh came up with another more aggressive expression, namely retreat, to describe the same state of affairs.

The difference between the two terms does not arise from different understandings or diagnosis of the state of the economy, rather it stems from the different positions of the two officials. The first was in the responsible position

of head of the government, and therefore is interested in playing down the problem to avoid blame. The second is not responsible for the past, instead, he is worried about the future and the formidable tasks awaiting him. Therefore, he is interested in highlighting the problem: if he fails to solve it, he has something to blame, and by the same measure, will gain considerable credit if he succeeds in revitalising the economy.

Leaving political and personal dimensions aside, let us try to examine the difference between economic slow down and economic retreat.

A slow down means that growth remains positive but at a slower pace. A retreat, on the other hand, may mean either a lower growth rate, as above, or a lower gross domestic product (GDP), i.e. negative growth, which is what it

was widely understood to mean based on the government's statement of policies.

We don't know exactly what the prime minister has in mind, because the statement can mean both. However, he later moderated his position and was more specific to mention retreat in per capita income, which may mean a positive growth rate lower than the rate of population growth which thus reduces the average standard of living.

It is not terribly important to change the description from slow down to retreat, because the remedies in both cases are the same. To ignore the economic problem may only serve to suppress the symptoms while giving the ailment more time to deteriorate.

The stability of Jordan is now perceived by all regional and international players as essential. Since the only risk that threatens

the stability of Jordan can arise from a weak economy, poverty, high unemployment, and a deteriorating standard of living, the world stands ready to extend assistance in one form or another. Under such circumstances, all the facts should be revealed, and no attempt should be made to pre-

tend that everything in Jordan's economy is business as usual.

The introduction of a new economic adjustment programme approved by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) should serve as evidence that Jordan is behaving responsibly. It is helping itself before asking others to help, and therefore deserves Arab and foreign support, including meaningful relief of the heavy external debt burden.

There are signs indicating a slow down in certain sectors of the economy. Other indicators show negative growth especially in agriculture, water, construction, exports, imports, fiscal deficit, money supply, and the foreign exchange reserves with the Central Bank.

The only positive and promising indicator is political. The general atmosphere has improved, and the attitude in Jordan is upbeat.



## Putting things in perspective

The discovery that Upsilon Andromedae — the closest star to our solar system — has more than one planet is probably the news of the millennium

By Gwynne Dyer

THIS WEEK: In Europe, a NATO plane mistook a column of Kosovo Albanian refugees for the Serbs who had burned their homes and bombed them, killing dozens. Discussion of this event was not drowned out, oddly enough, by the stunning discovery, simultaneously reported by separate teams of astronomers in Boston and San Francisco, that Upsilon Andromedae's innermost planet is not alone. There are two others orbiting the star as well.

In Asia, Pakistan's ex-Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was sentenced to five years in jail for corruption (probably deservedly, though the trial was unfair), and Malaysia's former Deputy Prime Minister Anwar Hussein was sentenced to six years for corruption (probably unjustly, and the trial was a joke). In other news, it was learned that Upsilon Andromedae's three planets orbit their sun as closely as Venus, Earth and Mars orbit our own.

In Africa, the many-sided war in the eastern Congo staggered from one indecisive clash to another, and Algeria once again failed to hold an election honest enough to end the civil war that has killed 70,000 people since 1992. Elsewhere in the galaxy, at least 18 relatively nearby stars have been found to have single planets orbiting them since 1995, but Upsilon Andromedae is the first multi-planet system ever discovered (apart from our own).

In the Americas, the Brazilian government lifted a ban on logging in the Amazon, and in Canada the nation held its breath while Wayne Gretzky, the greatest hockey player of his generation, pondered retirement. Earth-based wire services carried no sports reports whatever from any of Upsilon Andromedae's planets, though they are only 44 light-years away.

All right, don't beat it to death. It's understandable that local news will get a bigger play in parochial media like Earth's than even the biggest events elsewhere, and besides there probably aren't any sports reports from Upsilon Andromedae.

All three of the star's known planets are gas giants on the scale of the Solar System's biggest planet, Jupiter — three, fourths, twice, and four times Jupiter's size, reading from the innermost planet out. Planets that massive, made up mostly of gasses that would be poisonous to carbon-based life like ourselves, are unlikely to be home to anything we would recognise as a sportsman.

Moreover, while Upsilon Andromedae is a sun very like our own, its planet's orbits are very different. Upsilon Andromedae I is even closer to its sun than our own innermost neighbour, Mercury, in a tight 4.6-day circular orbit that makes it impossible for life. U. Andromedae II and III are at Earth- and Mars-like distances from their sun, but swing in and out in highly

elliptical orbits that make their surface temperatures vary wildly in the course of a year.

Nevertheless, this really is the news of the decade, or perhaps of the millennium: We are not alone!

"With the discovery of the first planetary system beyond our own", said Dr. Geoffrey Marcy, head of the San Francisco State University team that shared the discovery, "we are witnessing, I think, the emergence of a new era in human exploration." And though nobody has yet found planets able to support our kind of life around other stars, the odds that such planets abound — and in our own galactic neighbourhood — has now risen to near-certainty.

Scientists have to be conservative in their public speculation about the significance of their work, but this time they can barely contain their excitement.

Only since 1995 have we had any good evidence that our own family of nine planets circling the Sun's warmth was not a unique cosmic accident, explained Dr. Robert Noyes of the other team that shared the discovery, based at the Harvard-Smithsonian Centre for Astrophysics. Moreover, all the previous finds were giant single planets. That was not surprising, since existing techniques can "see" only giant planets at these great distances, but "if we find only individual ones, there's a nagging question of 'is it really a planet?'"

They might, instead, be what another astronomer called "failed stars". But Upsilon Andromedae's planets are unmistakably just that: the discovery "really establishes that these are planetary systems in the sense we know and love," added Noyes. What that means, in all probability, is that the entire universe is absolutely rife with life.

Dr. Debra Fischer of the San Francisco State University team put it in more cautious astronomer-speak: "If our interpretation is right and every star like our sun has planets, that really increases the odds (of finding life) a lot."

Every star has planets? The American teams have scanned over 900 nearby stars in the past few years and found only 18 with planets, including the three-planet Upsilon Andromedae system. They think another of those 18 stars has a second planet, but it may take several more years to be sure because it has a very long orbit: probably 15-25 years. So how does that translate into every star with planets, and many of them suitable for life?

The method they are currently using to find these planets — careful observation of the tiny wobbles that are produced in the star's own movement as planets orbit around it, followed by complex calculations to figure out the planets' size and orbits — practically guarantees that they can only find huge planets which are in very close orbits round their stars. That sort of system, on present evi-

...if an infinite number of monkeys tapped randomly at an infinite number of typewriters, sooner or later one of them would type out the complete works of William Shakespeare

dence, is quite rare, but it is the only kind we can yet see. Smaller, more habitable planets like our own, or gas giants that are in orbits as far out as our own Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune, do not produce big enough wobbles in their sun to make their presence known at great distances. If you used the current methods from the distance of Upsilon Andromedae, you would not find any planets around our own sun.

But that doesn't mean they are not there, either in our own case or in several hundred billion others. It will be a while yet before better observational techniques can confirm it, but it's now likely that planets are as common in the universe as grains of sand on a beach — including several Copacabanas of planets exactly like our own. And since even the interstellar spaces are filled with the organic compounds that are the building blocks of life, most planets suitable for supporting our sort of life probably actually have it.

When I was a child, one of the ways they tried to explain the concept of infinity was to say that if an infinite number of monkeys tapped randomly at an infinite number of typewriters, sooner or later one of them would type out the complete works of William Shakespeare.

But here's a different take on infinity: a galaxy with a hundred billion Shakespeares and Pushkins and Rabindranath Tagores, some writing with claws, and some with tentacles, and some with fingers much like our own. And news reports in a trillion languages about a trillion air strikes, a trillion corruption trials, a trillion retiring sports heroes. Far away from here, but right now.

Of course, I'm only talking about our own galaxy, not the billions of others. But it does put things into a different perspective, doesn't it?

The writer is an independent London-based journalist whose articles are published in 45 countries

## Letters to the editor

### One step forward, two steps back

A COUPLE of days ago I read an article in the Times of London entitled "Peace Dividend across the River Jordan" on how peace is slowly changing the Middle East for the better. The essay was about a young Jordanian entrepreneur, Omar Salah, who, taking advantage of the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel, set up a joint venture with Israeli counterparts in Irbid, my home town, with an annual turnover of 62 million pounds. His company, according to the Times (Friday April 9, 1999) is now the largest garment manufacturer in the country employing more than 2000 people and exporting to such well known outlets in Europe and the U.S. as Gap, Banana Republic, and Marks & Spencer.

You can imagine how proud and elated I was to read this article. At last, I thought, my fellow countrymen are beginning to shed the antiquated mind sets and the atavistic world views which for years, had clouded our vision, constrained our action and turned us into zombie-like figures too afraid to embrace the rapidly changing world around us! At last we are adapting to the new realities of our time.

Until I browsed through the April 11 edition of the Jordan Times and read about a group calling itself the "anti-normalisation camp" who are apparently huffing and puffing because an Israeli actor — an Arab Israeli for that! — is about to perform on the Jordan stage. For a moment I couldn't believe what I was reading. Are these people for real? Is there really an active group in Jordan concentrating all its energy on fighting normalisation of relations with a neighbour we have no choice but to live with whether we like it or not? And for what end? And how could any alternative to normalisation possibly help our people and our country???

It is a great shame that the foresight of those two great Jordanian patriots King Abdullah and King Hussein, the founders of our country — may they rest in peace — who saw no benefit to us from a continued state of alienation with our Israeli neighbours, had not rubbed off on the zealots in our society who still live in fear of 'Zionist infiltration and conspiracies'!

Israel, my fellow countrymen, is no longer the enemy! If those fanatics wish to identify the real enemy of progress in our country all they need to do is to look in the mirror.

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 The American University in London  
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## Potty training

EVERYONE is talking about Jordan's water crisis, but very few people seem willing to play an active role to reduce the impact. Household water usage (water used in the cities versus that used for agriculture and industry) is approximately 30 per cent of the total. This is a relatively high percentage. What it means is that Jordanians can play an active role in reducing overall water consumption. There are 101 ways to do so including: shorter showers, not flushing the toilet every time, not letting the water run when washing the dishes or brushing teeth and not washing cars so often. Yet, from where I stand not too many folks are interested in taking responsibility for their actions. This may not come as a big surprise. Why get involved when it is so much easier to talk about the problem. I've noticed in fact, that water in Jordan is as widely discussed as the weather.

I ran an experiment at my house the other day with some guests to see if anyone was interested in doing their part to save water. I put a sign above the toilet that simply asked people not to flush the toilet if they were only going to urinate. At the end of the evening, I could flush the toilet once. It takes a while for urine to begin to smell so I did not see this being a problem. I also discussed with them why I felt the need to take this step and how I would appreciate their cooperation. Unfortunately, it was too much for them to handle. In every case, they flushed the toilet. I calculate that with a total of 6 flushes between 100 and 160 litres of fresh water went into the sewer. I am using official statistics. I suppose people are just embarrassed of their urine. Ironically, however, when the water shortage kicks in nobody is going to be able to flush their toilet anyway. So why don't people start conserving now? Are they ignorant or do they just not care? I think it must be the latter. My guests from the other evening are highly educated folks. From now on, I'm going to turn off the valve so they can't flush. I think I'll call it potty training.

Do you realise how much water would be saved if the people of West Amman flushed their toilet only one time less a day. A lot. Take it on faith. Also, if not flushing the toilet is too big of a deal, we could always start with something easier like not leaving the water running while shaving, like the guy at my sports club last night. The whole time it was running we were discussing Jordan's water problem. In the end, I told him that he was on candid camera and that we were doing a special feature on environmental ignorance.

Philip Thomas  
 Amman







## Dubai bears up well under oil price slump

DUBAI (R) — The Gulf emirate of Dubai, which promotes itself as a regional tourism and trade centre, has suffered less from the oil price slump than its neighbours, but needs to boost its industry, a leading economic official said.

Dubai Department of Economic Development chief Mohammed Al Abbar told Reuters that Dubai was less dependent on oil than some of its neighbours, although the United Arab Emirates' commercial centre was not immune from the oil slide.

"The government of Dubai has not been affected very much because there was very tight control on government expenditure anyway and our oil income is not so large...but I do think it affects people's psychology," he said in an interview.

He also said Dubai, one of the seven emirates of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), did not have big government-owned corporations that needed propelling up with subsidies.

Dubai produces around 250,000 barrels per day of oil, tiny in comparison to neighbouring Abu Dhabi, which produces the bulk of the UAE's output of about two million barrels per day.

Abu Dhabi, which has built up billions of dollars in overseas assets, also finances most of the UAE's federal budget.

Al Abbar said Dubai's drive to develop alternative sources of income, such as trade and tourism, was progressing well but the emirate still had further to go in diversifying income sources.

"I think the industrial sector is not getting enough attention...and it's important to give it attention because it is possible to build industrial production up to say between 15 to 18 per cent of GDP (gross domestic product) from around 9.5 or so now," he said.

But Al Abbar added that all Arab Gulf economies could emerge from the experience of low oil prices stronger and leaner.

"It's good (the oil price crisis) in the sense that it takes people back to their desks and makes them realise where the waste is, and governments are known for waste...it's good

for them to go back and rework and rethink these things," he said.

Speaking on developing the financial industry in the UAE, he indicated that "the non-existence of a stock exchange or capital market has been a disadvantage, but that is being sorted out."

The UAE has been working on setting up a formal bourse for several years. The central bank has said a draft law to set up the long-awaited exchange is expected to be approved in the next few months.

"I have no doubts that our stock exchange will eventually be very competitive, provided it keeps investor confidence high, provided it is monitored properly and that companies have to go through the proper unveiling of all information to the public — and these will be very strict conditions," Al Abbar said.

## Greenspan lashes out against protectionism in U.S.

DALLAS (R) — Federal Reserve (Fed) Chairman Alan Greenspan on Friday lashed out against a rising tide of protectionism in the United States and criticised the Clinton administration's trade policy for being too narrow-minded and confrontational.

"The United States has been in the forefront of the postwar opening up of international markets, much to our, and the rest of the world's, benefit," he said. "It would be a great tragedy were that process reversed."

Greenspan, a fervent free-market advocate, said the massive rise in world competition that growing international trade had caused over the past half century had resulted in "markedly higher standards of living" for participating countries — particularly the United States.

The central banker harshly criticised the administration's trade policies for being too adversarial, based on the belief that trade is a zero-sum game in which a

gain by one player is always to the detriment of the other.

"If trade barriers are lowered by both parties, each clearly benefits. But if one lowers barriers and the other does not, the country that lowered barriers unilaterally would still be better off having done so," he said.

Greenspan also cautioned against promoting trade policies solely in terms of how many jobs they might help to create, as the administration has done in trying to drum up support for the North American Free Trade Association (NAFTA) between the United States, Canada and Mexico that came into effect in 1994.

"We try to promote free trade on the mistaken ground that it will create jobs. The reason should be that it enhances standards of living through the effects of competition on productivity," he said.

The Clinton administration sold NAFTA over the objections of labour unions as a job-creating trade deal,

arguing it would create more high-wage jobs in the United States.

Most economists would call NAFTA a success, but the trade agreement has been criticised by labour groups, which say it has cost America manufacturing jobs and depressed U.S. wages.

Greenspan said the rapid transition to high-technology, facilitated by free trade, had brought painful changes for many workers in industries that were becoming less competitive.

But raising protectionist barriers in response to such "wrenching" adjustments would be the wrong response and risked slowing down overall economic growth, he warned.

"It would be a great tragedy were we to stop the wheels of progress because of an incapacity to assist the victims of progress," he said.

"The campaign to expand free trade is over now," Greenspan added. "It is a continuing battle."

## Record U.S. trade deficit increases pressure on Europe and Japan

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A record \$17 billion trade deficit in January highlighted ominous imbalances between the United States and its trading partners and revived calls for Europe and Japan to do more to boost growth.

The January figure, up from a \$14.1 billion shortfall in December, reflected a two per cent increase in imports and a 1.4 per cent slump in exports.

The rise in imports underscored a booming stock market that has lined the pockets of U.S. consumers and allowed them to indulge a near insatiable appetite for foreign goods.

On the other hand, the decline in exports pointed up stagnant or negative growth in the traditional U.S. markets of Europe, Japan and Latin America.

The January figures caught the attention of two U.S. cabinet ministers and the country's top trade official, each of whom said the ever-widening gap between robust, 6.1 per cent growth in the United States and sluggishness just about everywhere else is not sustainable.

"I don't worry about month-to-month numbers," said Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin,

"but I do think that over time, as the trade deficit increases — and it is very likely to increase given that we are growing so fast — that that can give rise to additional protectionist pressures."

The trade gap in 1998 hit a record \$168.9 billion and, according to unofficial estimates at the Commerce Department, could jump to \$200 billion this year.

Answering questions following a speech here, Rubin prodded the European Union (EU) to grow its economy and absorb more imports.

Otherwise, he suggested, trade frictions between the two trading powers — the United States and the EU — would be inevitable.

"We have a large and growing trade deficit and far more open markets than they do," he said.

"They have less open markets than we do, slower growth and a trade surplus that's either holding about the same or increasing," Rubin added. "If we're going to avoid having tension that comes from these kinds of imbalances, it is imperative that they increase domestic demand-led growth and open their markets more."

U.S. officials have repeatedly

insisted that both Europe and Japan do more to help struggling emerging market economies by buying more of their exports, arguing that the United States cannot be the sole growth engine for the world.

U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky turned her attention to recession-hit Japan and charged that Japanese officials had still to implement reforms needed for recovery.

Washington has been pressing Tokyo to adopt stimulative fiscal measures as well as economic and financial deregulation as a means of exposing Japanese companies to the benefits of competition.

"There is some more positive rhetoric coming out of Japan, but Japan is still a long way from fully implementing all of the economic reforms that it said it would," Barshefsky told CNBC television.

"To the extent that the economy recovers, two things will happen. One, our exports to Japan will grow again and two, Japan's excess capacity will be purchased by Japanese, in Japan, and will no longer flood the U.S. market," she said.

For Commerce Secretary William Daley, the focus of

concern was China, with whom the United States in January had a \$4.9 billion trade deficit, up from \$4.2 billion a year earlier and \$4 billion in December.

January exports to China from the United States came to \$800 million, the lowest since September 1996.

The problem with China, Daley said, is that "we have an open market for their goods (but) their market has not been open."

The trade figures are approaching "the point of being politically unsustainable, and I think that when you look at these numbers, that point may be occurring a little sooner than we thought," he added.

The trade numbers — not just with China but with Japan and Europe as well — are not likely to get better any time soon, according to economist David Gilmore of Foreign Exchange Analytics.

"The numbers in January represent more of a trend than an aberration," he said.

"Until we see stronger domestic demand in both Europe and Japan, these numbers are going to continue to look pretty horrific."

Exchange Rates Thursday, 18-04-99									
CURRENCY	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT
JORDAN DINAR	1.0000	0.1888	0.1927	1.8780	1.8772	0.1940	2.2598	0.2074	0.2080
BAHRAIN DINAR	5.2073	1.0000	1.0204	9.8483	9.9477	1.0301	11.8271	1.0864	1.0864
KUWAIT DINAR	5.1893	0.9788	1.0000	9.7454	9.7448	1.0000	11.8271	1.0864	1.0864
SAUDI RIYAL	0.5325	0.1005	0.1026	1.0001	1.0000	0.1035	1.1765	0.2663	0.2663
QATAR RIYAL	5.1427	0.9708	0.9910	9.8578	9.8573	1.0000	11.8271	1.0864	1.0864
OMAN RIYAL	0.4867	0.0824	0.0842	0.8202	0.8201	0.0830	0.9439	0.2000	0.2000
EGYPT POUND	4.8227	0.9104	0.9294	9.0570	9.0565	0.9294	11.8271	1.0864	1.0864
LIBYAN DINA	21.2147	0.4048	0.4082	39.8408	39.8408	0.4082	47.5402	0.2429	0.2429
US DOLLAR	1.4124	0.2888	0.2922	2.8828	2.8824	0.2922	3.3342	0.2929	0.2929
BRITISH POUND	0.8751	0.1752	0.1768	1.8434	1.8434	0.1768	2.1552	0.2152	0.2152
GERMAN MARK	2.5573	0.4828	0.4838	4.8327	4.8324	0.4838	5.8558	0.2353	0.2353
SWITZERLAND FRA	2.0972	0.3858	0.3861	3.8385	3.8383	0.3861	4.8221	0.2438	0.2438
FRANCE FRANC	8.5771	1.6191	1.6229	16.1077	16.1068	1.6229	19.0387	0.2438	0.2438
JAPAN YEN	1.8782	0.3168	0.3234	3.1517	3.1518	0.3234	3.9428	0.2438	0.2438
HOLLAND GUILDER	2.8814	0.5439	0.5553	5.4111	5.4111	0.5553	6.5977	0.2438	0.2438
SCANDINAVIAN KRONA	11.8722	2.2034	2.2493	21.9222	21.9200	2.2493	26.7207	0.2438	0.2438
ITALY LIRA	25.3177	4.7793	4.8759	47.7930	47.7930	4.8759	58.5551	0.2438	0.2438
SPAIN PESA	52.7472	9.9573	10.1847	99.5584	99.5581	10.1847	120.7754	0.2438	0.2438
AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	2.2211	0.4204	0.4282	4.1825	4.1822	0.4282	5.1296	0.2438	0.2438
NEW ZEALAND DOLLAR	4.2585	0.8073	0.8180	7.9714	7.9709	0.8180	9.7153	0.2438	0.2438
CYPRUS POUND	0.7486	0.1413	0.1443	1.4358	1.4358	0.1443	1.7456	0.2438	0.2438
AMERICAN SAMOA DOLLAR	17.9912	3.3963	3.4870	33.7873	33.7855	3.4870	41.9682	0.2438	0.2438
CANADA DOLLAR	2.1144	0.3991	0.4075	3.9705	3.9705	0.4075	4.8415	0.2438	0.2438
EURO	1.3070	0.2487	0.2519	2.4544	2.4543	0.2519	2.9928	0.2438	0.2438

MAJOR CURRENCIES AGAINST JORDAN DINAR									
CURRENCY	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT
US DOLLAR	1.0000	1.8140	0.5823	0.6735	0.1947	0.3416	0.4903	5.5788	1.0864
BRITISH POUND	0.1936	1.0000	0.5422	0.4173	0.1020	0.2124	0.3037	3.4565	0.8989
GERMAN MARK	1.8108	2.8223	1.0000	1.2194	0.2982	0.5338	0.8875	12.1512	1.9587
SWITZERLAND FRA	1.4848	2.3885	0.8201	1.0000	0.2445	0.2605	0.27375	8.2834	1.0864
FRANCE FRANC	8.0728	9.8012	3.3539	4.0868	1.0000	5.1102	5.8558	126.4008	1.0864
JAPAN YEN	118.8500	181.7755	65.8247	80.6242	19.5086	4.3031	49.3715	52.4902	1.0864
HOLLAND GUILDER	2.0400	3.2808	1.1287	1.3739	0.3358	0.7169	1.3000	1.3808	2.9208
SCANDINAVIAN KRONA	8.2638	13.3378	4.9442	5.9587	1.3809	8.9505	16.3064	48.0229	1.0864
ITALY LIRA	17.8248	28.9208	9.9000	12.0723	2.9318	15.0588	8.7867	0.0000	19.3714
SPAIN PESA	37.3450	60.2748	20.8288	25.1915	6.1488	31.0288	16.3064	208.3415	40.3587
AUSTRALIA DOLLAR	1.5788	2.5448	0.8788	1.0620	0.2587	0.2072	0.27759	8.7868	1.7402
NEW ZEALAND DOLLAR	3.0052	4.8504	1.6509	2.0240	0.6489	2.5293	1.4731	16.7655	3.2471
CYPRUS POUND	0.5305	0.8564	0.2867	0.3573	0.0873	0.4481	0.2588	2.9689	0.9728
AMERICAN SAMOA DOLLAR	12.7378	20.5568	7.0351	8.5788	2.0878	12.7202	8.2440	71.2620	1.7657
CANADA DOLLAR	1.4870	2.4162	0.8288	1.0082	0.2485	1.2599	0.7338	8.3515	0.6178
EURO	0.9253	1.4835	0.5111	0.6232	0.1524	0.7788	0.4538	5.6727	0.3303

CENTRAL BANK BULLETIN									
CURRENCY	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT
US DOLLAR	1.0000	1.8140	0.5823	0.6735	0.1947	0.3416	0.4903	5.5788	1.0864
BRITISH POUND	0.1936	1.0000	0.5422	0.4173	0.1020	0.2124	0.3037	3.4565	0.8989
GERMAN MARK	1.8108	2.8223	1.0000	1.2194	0.2982	0.5338	0.8875	12.1512	1.9587
SWITZERLAND FRA	1.4848	2.3885	0.8201	1.0000	0.2445	0.2605	0.27375	8.2834	1.0864
FRANCE FRANC	8.0728	9.8012	3.3539	4.0868	1.0000	5.1102	5.8558	126.4008	1.0864
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CANADA DOLLAR	1.4870	2.4162	0.8288	1.0082	0.2485	1.2599	0.7338	8.3515	0.6178
EURO	0.9253	1.4835	0.5111	0.6232	0.1524	0.7788	0.4538	5.6727	0.3303

WORLD STOCK MARKETS									
STOCK MARKET	INDEX	CLOSING	LAST CLOSE	CHANGE	PRECIOUS METALS	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT	UNIT
FRANKFURT	DAX	5182.18	5189.74	+7.56	SILVER	281.80	282.20	0.40	0.40
HONG KONG	HANG SENG	11834.70	11889.69	+54.99	GOLD	267.00	268.00	1.00	1.00
NEW YORK	NYSE	8483.80	8513.10	+29.30	PLATINUM	87.00	87.00	0.00	0.00
NEW YORK	S&P 500	1041.69	1046.01	+4.32					
NEW YORK	NYSE COMP	825.87	831.67	+5.80					
NEW YORK	AMEX COMP	728.12	727.80	-0.32					
NEW YORK	S&P 500	1041.69	1046.01	+4.32					
TOKYO	Nikkei 225	18727.08	18764.64	+37.56					
PARIS	CAC 40	4349.28	4367.41	+18.13					

## UAE Etisalat in GSM expansion deal with Motorola

United Arab Emirates' GSM network operator Etisalat and Motorola, Inc.'s Network Solutions Sector (NSS) have announced an award worth \$27 million for the expansion of the GSM900 MHz network in Sharjah and the Northern Emirates. The expansion will continue until the end of 1999, Motorola NSS will supply its



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## Kiefer to face Ferreira in Japan Open final

TOKYO (AFP) — Nicolas Kiefer clawed back against Jonas Bjorkman at the Japan Open tennis tournament on Saturday to set up a final meeting with Wayne Ferreira who earlier breezed past Thomas Johansson for his first final berth in more than two years.

Kiefer needed two hours six minutes to fend off Bjorkman's chip-and-charge tactics in the final set to score a 4-6, 6-1, 6-4 victory against the Swede. "I had preferred to play a Swedish player tomorrow,"

said Kiefer, after a turnaround in his luck against opponents from that country.

"In the Davis Cup last year in Hamburg, I lost to (Thomas) Enqvist on the first day, I lost to Bjorkman on the second day."

"Yesterday, I beat Enqvist and today I beat Bjorkman, so it would have been better if Johansson is in the final, but I have to play Ferreira. I hope I can beat him," added the 21-year-old German fifth seed.

Bjorkman, who shocked former Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek of the Netherlands by defeating him Friday, hit a service return winner at 15-40 to break the third game of the final set.

But Kiefer immediately broke back for 2-3 and went on to pulverise Bjorkman's serve-and-volley game in the eighth before serving out for the match.

"I played a couple of times against him," Kiefer said. "We have both almost the same game, both return



South African tennis player Wayne Ferreira returns the ball against Thomas Johansson of Sweden during their semifinal match in the Japan Open tennis tournament in Tokyo. Seventh-seeded Ferreira defeated fourth-seeded Johansson 6-3, 6-2 (AFP photo)

very good, both serve very good, and play from the baseline and sometimes come in."

"I knew there would be many breaks and I'm happy that I won this match. I tried to do everything. When it was important, I served very good," he added.

Ferreira secured a final berth for the first time since Toronto in August 1996 by beating fourth seed Johansson of Sweden 6-3, 6-2.

Ferreira said he hoped to

mark the end of injury-plagued years during which he had surgery to his right knee three years ago and to his right ankle he twisted twice in the French Open in 1997 and 1998.

"Right now, being in the finals for the first time in over two years and a half, it's a great feeling. I'd like to win too. It'll be the best solution," said the 27-year-old.

"I played the Davis Cup two weeks ago. I had two very, very tough matches which I won. I think get-

ting these two matches helped me a lot to boost my confidence. That is, I guess, all I needed."

Japanese ace Ai Sugiyama moved to within a match of winning the women's singles title for a third year running, although she struggled to beat American Jane Chi 7-6 (8/6), 6-3.

In the final, Sugiyama will play second-seeded Amy Frazier, who edged past fellow American Corina Morariu 6-4, 5-7, 6-3.

## LOCAL SPORTS SCENE



### Swimming team leaves for Arab shortcourse event

AMMAN — Arab Swimming Federation (ASF) Secretary General Tal'at Nasser will leave for Cairo on Sunday to represent Jordan at the union's general assembly and the ASF board meetings which will be attended by the federations of Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Sudan, Lebanon, Palestine, UAE, and Iraq. During the meetings, the ASF permanent headquarters is expected to be moved to Amman. The meeting comes ahead of the First Arab Youth Shortcourse Swimming Championship, which will be organised by the ASF in Cairo from 20-23 April. Jordan's junior swimming team, which will participate in the event as part of preparations for the 9th Pan-Arab Games — Al Hussein Tournament, is expected to achieve good results and set new records at the short-course event.

## Sunderland secure English 1st division title

LONDON (AFP) — Sunderland earned the English first division title on Friday with a 3-1 victory at Barnsley following goals from Nicky Summerbee, Lee Clark and Kevin Phillips.

Sunderland had already guaranteed their place in the Premiership for next season following Tuesday night's 5-2 hammering of Bury at Gigg Lane.

Now they were hoping to avenge their only league defeat at the Stadium of Light this term and make certain of the title with a win over Barnsley.

They set about their task in perfect fashion as Summerbee beat keeper Tony Bullock just a minute before the break with a low shot under the advancing keeper.

The second goal came in the 63rd minute as Clark ran on to Kevin Ball's pass, with Bullock again beaten by a low side-foot shot as he came out to block.

In the 86th minute, Mike Sheron scored from Craig Hignett's corner to give Barnsley hope of securing a point.

Phillips crowned Sunderland's victory, however, with a brilliant goal, cutting inside before curling his shot past Bullock from 20 yards.



Japanese tennis player Ai Sugiyama stretches to return a ball from Jane Chi of the U.S. during their semi-final match in the Japan Open tennis tournament in Tokyo. Top-seeded Sugiyama defeated seventh-seeded Chi 7-6 (8/6), 6-3 (AFP photo)

## Manchester United gain four-point lead

LONDON (AFP) — Manchester United went four points clear at the top of the Premiership on Saturday as they stroled to a 3-0 victory over Sheffield on Wednesday at Old Trafford.

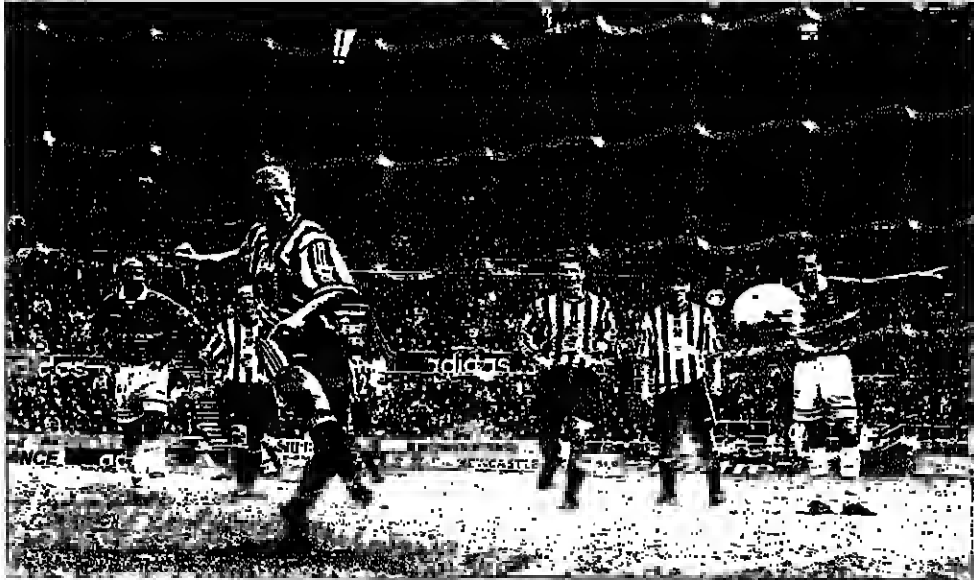
United boss Alex Ferguson, with an eye on the European Cup semifinal second leg with Juventus next week, again rested strike pair Dwight Yorke and Andy Cole, who were left out of the starting line-up for the epic mid-week FA Cup semifinal replay win over Arsenal.

United's strike rate was hardly disrupted as stand-ins Teddy Sheringham and Ole Gunnar Solskjaer filled in admirably, grabbing a goal apiece before the break. It was Sheringham's 250th goal in league football.

Paul Scholes hit a third in the 62nd minute to seal the match and Ferguson immediately took off both Jaap Stam and Roy Keane to presumably rest them for the Juventus game.

Second-placed Chelsea have a chance to reduce the deficit with their home match against Leicester City on Monday, and Arsenal, in third spot also four points behind Manchester United, host Wimbledon on Monday.

When Steffen Iversen



Newcastle United's English international striker Alan Shearer has his penalty saved by Everton goalkeeper Thomas Myhr, during their FA Premiership clash at St. James' Park (AFP photo)

scored for Tottenham at Nottingham Forest in the 62nd minute to lead 1-0. Forest were set for possible relegation should Charlton and Blackburn have both won.

Southampton's Mariani Pahars then equalized for Blackburn with just five minutes to go for a 3-3 draw at the Dell to earn Forest a reprieve. As it happened Charlton could only draw with fourth-placed Leeds who failed to gain much ground on the leading three clubs.

Jamie Stuart scored for

Charlton Athletic in the 20th minute and Jonathan Woodgate equalised for Leeds four minutes later.

Everton's Kevin Campbell had a high profile game in their 3-1 victory against Newcastle.

In fact he scored the fastest goal of the day at Goodison Park to give relegation-haunted Everton a flying start with a goal after just 42 seconds.

Campbell then scored a

second goal a minute before half-time before Alan Shearer pulled a goal back for Newcastle. Scot

Gemmil scored a third for Everton two minutes from time.

West Ham United beat Derby a mammoth 5-1 with goals from Paolo Di Canio, Eyal Berkovic, Ian Wright, Neil Ruddock and Trevor Sinclair, but remain in sixth spot, one place below that needed for a UEFA Cup place, as fifth-placed Aston Villa won 1-0 at Liverpool through an Ian Taylor goal.

Coventry City are still in danger of relegation as they fell 2-1 against Middlesbrough.

## Mauresmo takes revenge in Fed Cup

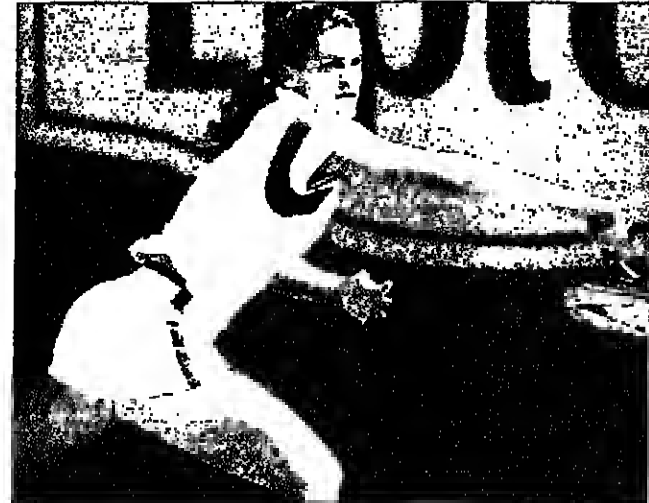
MOSCOW (AFP) — France's Amelie Mauresmo took just 71 minutes to take her revenge on Russia's Elena Likhovtseva who beat her last month at the Lipton Championships in Key Biscayne by winning her match in the World Group first round of the Fed Cup here on Saturday.

In front of a partisan Russian crowd, the 19-year-old French player won in straight sets 6-2, 6-2 to give France their first point of the tie.

"A first win in the Fed Cup, it's something special," said Mauresmo following the game. "I hope this is the beginning of a winning streak. I felt comfortable during the match, but I wasn't very consistent in my service."

"Likhovtseva beat me in three sets at Key Biscayne, but since then things have changed. I was more prepared mentally and physically and I think Elena didn't play as well."

Mauresmo, classed 14th in the world and runner-up in the Australian Open, showed more power then during her previous encounter



Amelie Mauresmo

Likhovtseva and clearly dominated with a strong serve.

Likhovtseva had a chance to come back in the first set and 0-5

down to Mauresmo saved four set points to come back 2-5.

However, she missed the opportunity to make it 3-5 and the French player took the set in 36 minutes.

"Mauresmo played well," Likhovtseva conceded after the game. "I was very nervous before the match and made a lot of faults at the start. Psychologically, I think that being No. 1 (in the absence of Anna Kournikova) had a negative effect."

In the next encounter, World No. 11 Nathalie Tauziat of France is favourite against Russia's Tatiana Panova.

## Australia blitz favourites Austria

KLAGENFURT, Austria (AFP) — Australia raced to a two match lead in their FedCup World Group II first round tie against Austria here on Saturday.

Australia's 16-year-old prodigy Jelena Dokic, ranked 206 in the world, saw off Austrian Barbara Schett 6-3, 5-7, 6-4, while team-mate Alicia Molik, ranked 101, beat Austria's Sylvia Plischke 5-7, 6-1, 7-5.

World No. 19 Schett and Plischke, ranked 39, were the pre-match favourites.

The world's best junior player Dokic played a faultless game and overwhelmed Schett who made a series of faults during 100 minutes of play.

Schett blamed her lack of preparation on clay for her poor showing. "I wasn't properly prepared, my shots weren't long enough and I couldn't reach the lines," she said.

The Austrians now face a weighty task of having to win Sundays' two singles and doubles match if they are to qualify for the World Group I.



## Cinema Theatre Cinema Theatre Cinema Theatre Cinema Theatre

CINEMA TEL: 463-4144  
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Steven Spielberg's  
**ANTZ**  
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:15  
**SAVING PRIVATE RYAN**  
Show: 9:30

CINEMA TEL: 463-4144  
**PHILADELPHIA '2'**  
Sophie Marceau ...  
in Leo Tolstoy's  
**ANNA KARENINA**  
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA TEL: 5699238  
**PLAZA**  
Leonardo Di Caprio ... in  
**TITANIC**  
Shows: 12:15, 3:30, 6:45, 9:45

CINEMA TEL: 5677420  
**CONCORDE**  
ALWAD MAHROUS  
BTA' AL WAZIR  
Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30  
**CONCORDE 2**  
**DISCLOSURE**

CINEMA TEL: 5934793  
**GALLERIA 1**  
ABDOUN  
www.cns.com.jo/Galleria  
Julia Roberts ... in  
**STEPMOM**  
Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45  
**THE MAGIC SWORD**  
(Thursday and Friday mornings)

CINEMA TEL: 5934793  
**GALLERIA 2**  
ABDOUN  
www.cns.com.jo/Galleria  
Tom Hanks & Meg Ryan ... in  
**YOU'VE GOT M@IL**  
Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:45  
**RUSH HOUR**  
Shows: 5:00 p.m. only

Hisham Yanes Theatre  
TEL: 4625155  
The political satire  
**AL SALAM AL**  
Starting at 8:30 p.m.



## World Youth Cup Flight chaos hits Brazil plans

LAGOS (R) — Brazil may still be recovering from the effects of a tumultuous trip to Lagos when they face Uruguay in Sunday's World Youth Cup quarterfinal.

The players have been unable to train properly because of the difficulties in getting a flight from Calabar, where they beat Croatia 4-0 in their second round game on Wednesday.

Coach Joao Carlos Costa said the special charter flight which was supposed to take them to Lagos was cancelled on Thursday and then again on Friday, forcing them to catch a local commercial flight and shorten training sessions.

"When we got to the airport, there was a multitude trying to embark, plus the two delegations," he told Reuters. "There was a pile of bags which they were throwing into the hold, it was amazing."

"Finally we got on the plane, but they shut the door before my supervisor could board. He was left on the runway. He eventually got on after a Nigerian official agreed to get out."

For the two days, the Croatian and Brazilian coaches were going between the hotel and airport in a convoy. "Brazil have overcome a 2-0 defeat by Spain in their opening match to become one of the title favourites, having hammered in 12 goals on their way to winning their subsequent three games."

This is despite an almost total lack of preparation for the competition. Costa inherited his 18-man squad from

predecessor Toninho Barroso, who resigned for personal reasons on the eve of the tournament.

"We only had the squad together for five days before leaving Brazil and even then only 10 players turned up because their clubs wanted them for championship matches," he said.

Striker Fernando Baiano and right-back Indio found themselves in the middle of political disturbances in Paraguay, where their club side Corinthians played two matches in the south American Libertadores Cup in the week of the troubles.

The team arrived hours after Paraguay's vice-president had been assassinated and their matches in Asuncion went ahead despite riots in the city.

Costa has also been trying, in vain, to fend off agents.

"I've heard that there have been a couple of attempted deals," he said.

"I tell to the players that they should concentrate on the championship, that if they do well here things will happen of their own accord afterwards. But the hotels are open to the public and we can't stop people phoning or talking to the players."

The other three quarter-finals on Sunday see Nigeria playing Mali in Eougu, Ghana meeting Spain in Kaduna and Mexico, who eliminated champions Argentina, playing Japan in Ibadan.

## Munich beat Frankfurt for Champions League booster

BONN (AFP) — Bayern Munich beat Eintracht Frankfurt 3-1 on Friday to move 13 points clear in the Bundesliga and give them a boost of confidence before their European Champions League match on Wednesday.

Bosnian striker Hasan Salihamidzic found the net in the 26th minute. Alexander Zickler scored eight minutes later and midfielder Thomas Strunz hit the third for Bayern in the 72nd minute with a lob.

Before any goal had been scored, Munich's Stefan Effenberg missed a penalty for a foul on Carsten Jancker.

In snowy conditions, it was a result coach Ottmar Hitzfeld wanted after three goalless draws and a defeat in their last four matches in both league and Champions League. Their 2-1 defeat at Kaiserslautern on Tuesday was Bayern's first loss since November 21.

Bayern had both sweeper Lothar Matthaus and Effenberg back from injury which is good news for their Champions League semi-final, second leg against Dynamo Kiev. They drew the first match in the Ukraine 3-3.

However, France's Bixente Lizarazu, Brazilian Giovane Elber, keeper Oliver Kahn, defender Michael Tarnat were all out injured and Ghana's Samuel Kuffour was suspended.

Mario Basler fed Salihamidzic, who, making the most of a defensive error, headed home for the first goal. Zickler controlled the ball well with his chest before coolly scoring for the second, and Strunz's delicate lob for the third was impressive as his shot was from outside the area.

Hitzfeld took off Matthaus after an hour, presumably to keep him fresh for Wednesday. Lizarazu and Elber apart, Munich are expected to be at full-strength against Kiev.

Norway's Jan Aage Fjortoft made the most of the absence of Matthaus to score a goal for Frankfurt 10 minutes from time.

Second-placed Bayer Leverkusen host Borussia Muenchengladbach on Saturday and a win would help their hopes for direct entry into next year's Champions League following the 2-1 loss of third-placed Kaiserslautern at Hansa Rostock on Friday.

## Morocco's Alami defeats Martin to reach Barcelona final

BARCELONA (AP) — Unseeded Moroccan Karim Alami overcame defending champion Todd Martin of the United States in the semifinals of the Open Seat Conde de Godo, confirming his status as the surprise of the \$950,000 tournament.

Alami took one hour and seven minutes to defeat Martin 6-3, 6-4, serving seven aces and keeping World's No. 8 constantly on the defensive. The Moroccan, ranked 83rd in the world, is now due to face Spaniard Felix Mantilla in Sunday's final — his first ever in a big tournament.

10th-seeded Mantilla won his semifinal against fellow countryman Francisco Claver earlier Saturday 6-3, 6-2. "I'm disappointed that I didn't play better today," said Martin after losing to Alami but winning \$37,500 for reaching the semifinals.

"My serve was my best weapon today, it was working particularly well and you need that against Martin," Alami said. Alami added that he wasn't worried about playing Barcelona-native Mantilla in front of that player's home crowd.

"I'm sure the public will be for Felix, but I like that, it makes me more motivated...I'll have to be playing at the top of my game," he said.

The earlier semifinal was marked by long exchanges



Moroccan Karim Alami hits a forehand during his semi-final match against U.S. Todd Martin at the Barcelona Open. Alami won 6-3, 6-4 (AFP photo)

of ground strokes lasted one hour and 19 minutes, with 24-year-old Mantilla displaying a powerful serve and a practically faultless

baseline game. Mantilla, ranked 19th in the world, said he was excited about playing the finals in front of family and friends.

"Since I was a little boy I've been dreaming of being in the finals here. It would be an even greater dream to win it," he said.

## Gretzky confirms retirement

NEW YORK (AFP) — Ice hockey great Wayne Gretzky confirmed Friday that he will retire at the close of the National Hockey League season on Sunday.

The game's all-time leading scorer with a career total of 1,072 goals, Gretzky was firm in his resolve as he announced the news that hockey fans have dreaded at Madison Square Garden.

"To me, this is a party, this is a celebration. I hope everyone understands that I look on it that way," said Gretzky, although the catch in his voice made clear the emotion of the moment.

"It's obvious that today I've officially retired. Sunday will be my last game."

As he struggled to keep his composure, Gretzky joked: "I should take my own advice."

Reports of Gretzky's impending retirement had gained in force as the end of the season neared.

On Thursday night he said it would take a miracle for the New York Rangers' ownership to talk him into staying when they met on Friday morning.

Those remarks followed the Rangers' 2-2 tie against the Ottawa Senators in Ottawa, where Gretzky took the ice for the last time in his native Canada.

With his father, wife and children in attendance, Gretzky was called back for several curtain calls as fans chanted "one more year, one more year."

But No. 99 couldn't be persuaded. The 38-year-old Gretzky will end his legendary 20-year NHL career when the Rangers host the Pittsburgh Penguins on Sunday.

"I love the game, I love to play. Whether it's now or next year, I'm always going to miss the National Hockey League," Gretzky said. "It's going to be tough for me, but the challenge and change I look forward to in the future."

This has been a trying season for Gretzky, who



An emotional New York Rangers hockey player Wayne Gretzky pauses during his retirement announcement at Madison Square Garden in New York, NY. Gretzky will play his final game Sunday (AFP photo)

missed 12 games with a neck injury. New York has been a disappointment and will miss the playoffs for the second year in a row.

Despite playing injured for much of the season, Gretzky leads the Rangers with 61 points on nine goals and 52 assists in 69 games.

He is the NHL's all-time leading scorer with 2,856 points and his 894 goals and 1,962 assists also are NHL records. Gretzky also holds playoff marks with 122 goals, 260 assists and 382 points.

Gretzky has won nine Hart Trophies as the league's Most Valuable Player.

By scoring his 1,072nd goal on March 29, Gretzky became the all-time leading goal-scorer in hockey history, moving past hockey idol Gordie Howe. The record includes regular-season and playoff games in the NHL and the defunct World Hockey Association.

Gretzky's awe-inspiring

statistics pale in comparison to his role as an ambassador for the game.

"He's meant so much to this game because both of what he's done on the ice, which I think is incomparable for any athlete in any sport, and what he's done off the ice," NHL commissioner Gary Bettman said.

After Gretzky was dealt by Edmonton to the Los Angeles Kings on Aug. 9, 1983 in a trade that rocked the sports world, his presence on the West Coast paved the way for the addition of the San Jose Sharks and Mighty Ducks of Anaheim.

The westward expansion was just the first stage in the NHL's development into a truly national league.

The season before Gretzky joined the NHL (1979-80), there were 21 teams, 18 of which were in the same cities they are now. Now there are 27 teams, and by 2000-01 there will be 30. Attendance has risen from 8.4 million to 18.7 million.

## NBA STANDINGS

Eastern Conference				
Atlantic Division				
	W	L	PCT	GB
Orlando	28	11	.718	
Miami	25	12	.676	2
New York	21	18	.538	7
Philadelphia	20	18	.526	7 1-2
Washington	15	23	.395	12 1-2
Boston	14	24	.368	13 1-2
New Jersey	10	28	.263	17 1-2
Central Division				
Indiana	26	13	.667	
Milwaukee	22	16	.579	3 1-2
Atlanta	23	17	.575	3 1-2
Detroit	22	17	.564	4
Cleveland	20	18	.526	5 1-2
Toronto	18	19	.486	7
Charlotte	17	20	.459	8
Chicago	10	29	.256	16
Western Conference				
Midwest Division				
X-Utah	30	8	.789	
San Antonio	26	12	.684	4
Houston	26	13	.667	4 1-2
Minnesota	21	19	.525	10
Dallas	13	25	.342	17
Denver	12	28	.300	19
Vancouver	7	32	.179	23 1-2
Pacific Division				
X-Portland	29	9	.763	
LA Lakers	25	15	.625	5
Seattle	19	19	.500	10
Phoenix	19	20	.487	10 1-2
Golden State	17	21	.447	12
Sacramento	17	22	.436	12 1-2
LA Clippers	6	32	.158	23

X-Clinched playoff berth

## NOTICE OF SALE

Date and Time of Sale: Tuesday, April 20, 1999 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.  
Location: American Embassy Warehouse, Abdoun (Use the Back Gate)  
Items to be Sold: Office and Residential Furniture, Appliances, Equipment and Miscellaneous and one Vehicle

## Conditions of Sale:

- Sale is conducted by sealed bid.
- All property is sold on as-is, where-is, non-returnable basis for cash payment without refund or warranty.
- Bid forms and list of lots will be available at time of sale.
- All items will be available for inspection at sale time.
- A deposit of 20% of the total bid is required at time of bid in cash JD only. This is strictly enforced.
- All bids must be deposited in lock box by 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 20.
- All bidders will be notified and deposit refunded to unsuccessful bidders by Wednesday, April 21.
- All property must be paid for and removed by COB Thursday, April 22.
- If not removed by COB April 22, a storage fee of JD50,000 per day for each lot will be imposed.

## GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMARA HUSCH  
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ANSWERS TO WEEKLY BRIDGE QUIZ

Q1 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:  
♠ A J 4 6 3 2 ♣ A K 9 ♦ A 10 ♠ Partner opens the bidding with one heart. What do you respond?  
A - There are two conflicting ideas here. One is that, when responding, you should not suggest a good four-card major. The other is that, with no ruffing value and 16-18 points, the correct response is three no trumps. We prefer the latter, especially since, facing a five-card heart suit, chances of finding partner with a four-card spade suit as well are slight.

Q2 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠ K 4 2 ♣ 6 ♦ A 6 5 ♠ A J 10 7 5 3 The bidding has proceeded: NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST 1♣ 1♥ 2♣ 2♥ What do you bid now?  
A - No bid is perfect. The one bid that is barred is three clubs — that shows a minimum two-over-one initial response, and you are full value for that action. It is a question of whether you should make the fourth-suit forcing rebid of two spades or show the spade-stopper by bidding two no trumps, which is what we recommend. If this action is not forcing in your methods, so much the better since the hands might not be fitting well.

Q3 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠ K J 9 7 6 2 ♣ Q 2 ♦ A 8 7 6 ♠ A 10 7 5 3 The bidding has proceeded: NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST 1♣ 1♥ 2♣ 2♥ What do you bid now?  
A - Partner's rebid on this auction promises a six-card suit, so you cannot stop short of game in the known eight-card fit. However, we would go about our business of describing the hand further by bidding three diamonds — slam possibilities still exist.

Q4 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠ A Q J 8 4 2 ♣ K J 8 6 ♦ A 9 ♠ 5 The bidding has proceeded: SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST 1♣ 1♥ 2♣ 2♥ What do you bid now?  
A - If partner has no wasted club values and a perfect fit, slam is possible. As a practical matter, however, forget about stonpa and simply jump to four spades. Even that contract could be in jeopardy if partner has the "wrong" cards.

Q5 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠ A K 10 7 6 5 ♣ K Q 9 ♦ K O 3 ♠ A 10 7 5 3 The bidding has proceeded: SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST 1♣ 1♥ 2♣ 2♥ What do you bid now?  
A - The choice is between two bids — a jump in three spades or three hearts. The leap to three spades is limited and can be passed, while three hearts is game forcing. Since three spades might be passed when slam in hearts can be made (partner has a singleton spade, ace-fifth in hearts and jack of diamonds) the choice is clear. Jump to three hearts.

Q6 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠ A K O 7 ♣ J 8 5 ♦ 8 6 ♠ A K 4 2 The bidding has proceeded: SOUTH WEST NORTH EAST 1♣ 1♥ 2♣ 2♥ What do you bid now?  
A - You have a six-loser hand and you can expect partner to cover no more than three of those, so five clubs does not rate to make. However, your spade suit is certainly the equivalent of a five-card suit, so we recommend the bid Arthur Robinson made in the 1964 World Bridge Olympiad — four spades! Partner held three spades to the jack, and 10 tricks rolled in.

## New Rover Group Franchise Opens In Amman

Ole Jordan Ltd., the Middle East's newest Land Rover and Rover Cars franchise, has opened for business in Amman. As sole distributor and agent for BMW-owned Rover Group in Jordan, Ole Jordan is able to offer the very latest Land Rovers — Cantei Trophy star Freelander, highly-acclaimed New Discovery, the supremely capable luxury off-roader Range Rover and the iconic Defender — as well as MG and the respected R400 and R200 Rover Cars. The company has invested in impressive new showroom, near the Jordanian University on Al Madina Al Mounawara Street, West Amman, and in staff, brought in specially for the launch of the new dealership. "The first few weeks of trading have seen tremendous interest from Jordanian customers and sales have exceeded all expectations," said a spokesman for Ole Jordan Ltd. "Those who have already visited our new showroom are either old friends of Land Rover and Rover Cars — people who have trusted these world-renowned brands for years — or those who are new to the brand but regard the latest Rover Group products, built in an era of BMW-ownership, as exciting alternatives to less capable competitor vehicles."

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# Explosion in London injures 22

LONDON (AFP) — Twenty-two people, including a policeman, were injured in an explosion in a packed market street in south London on Saturday, a London Fire Brigade spokesman said.

A spokesman for London police headquarters at Scotland Yard said "explosive officers, a police helicopter and all the emergency services" were at the scene outside an Iceland supermarket in Brixton.

He said some people were seriously injured, adding there were "no fatalities believed, but that is unconfirmed."

There was no warning given for the explosion, he said, which occurred just before 5:30 p.m. (1630 GMT) on the area's main market day.

Accounts from eyewitnesses suggest the device was a home-made nail bomb.

Police sources said the explosion was not believed linked to Northern Ireland paramilitary groups.

A spokesman for the London Fire Brigade said it was a "major incident" and put the injury toll at 22.

Officers cleared the area because of suspicions of a second device.

Eyewitness Michael Christie, 16, who works on a fruit and vegetable stall in Brixton market, said the suspected bomb had been placed in a blue sports bag and placed between two other market stalls.

"A tall man with blond hair said there was a bomb in the

bag and a little boy picked it up and moved it," he said. "Straight after that it went off."

The boy suffered only minor injuries to his foot where a nail embedded in it, he added.

Another witness David Gledhill said: "There was a huge explosion. Most of us thought it was thunder, but it was a very, very loud bang. Glass was blown all over the place."

Gledhill, editor of a regional newspaper, The Bath Chronicle, continued: "After it went off, there was an awful lot of people lying flat on the road."

"It is a very busy area and it was absolutely packed before the explosion."

Brixton resident Jools Thomas said a friend who is a nurse had reported that many of the injured had been hit by nails.

"A friend of mine who is a nurse tried to help patch up the worst. There was a bloke with a nail stuck in his head and another with a nail in his lung."

"It was like a sonic boom. There was a flash and then this sonic boom which vibrated everything and then the smoke started billowing out from near the market, where people were doing their shopping."

"Who could put a nail bomb there, where there was all those people just doing their shopping? It is just beyond me."

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Israeli warplanes hit Hizbollah sites

TYRE (AFP) — Israeli warplanes bombed a stronghold of the Shiite Muslim Hizbollah close to the Israeli-occupied buffer zone in southern Lebanon on Saturday following an earlier attack by the militia, police said. Israeli jets fired four missiles near the village of Zibqin at around 6:30 p.m. (1530 GMT), they said. The raid came following an earlier attack claimed by the Hizbollah on the Israeli military post of Blatt. Security sources said eight mortar rounds fell around the Israeli post. There was no word of casualties from either attack.

### LAA set to resume service

TRIPOLI (AFP) — Libyan Arab Airlines (LAA) on Saturday invited passengers to begin booking seats as it resumes normal international service this week following the suspension of a seven-year embargo on Tripoli. LAA "invites passengers to contact our offices about international flights that will resume on April 22," the state-owned carrier said in a statement. Jordanian officials said Thursday that an LAA commercial flight had arrived in Amman the day before, but added the flight was carrying only aviation and airline officials. The U.N. air and arms embargo was suspended earlier this month following the handover of two Libyan suspects in the 1988 bombing of a U.S. airliner over Lockerbie, Scotland, that killed 270 people. The economic and diplomatic sanctions included a ban on air travel to and from Libya as well as the delivery of aeroplanes and their spare parts to the Libyans. Only domestic flights were permitted. The ban cost LAA some \$3 billion, according to Tripoli.

### Iran slams Algerian army over polls

TEHRAN (R) — Iran's state radio on Saturday blasted Algeria's presidential elections as a failed attempt by the country's ruling military to gain political legitimacy and defeat Islamist opponents. "Thursday's election was a coup de grace to the military's seven-year effort to gain support among the people and to isolate Islamic opposition figures and groups," Tehran Radio said in a commentary. "The military-backed government is now totally under question for its inability to allow an election with a minimum of freedom," the radio said. Abdullaziz Bouteflika, a candidate backed by the military, took 74 per cent of the vote in the poll marked by low turnout. "The people's chilly response to the elections showed that the Muslim and revolutionary Algerian nation, which has given a million martyrs for its freedom and independence, is not willing to submit to military dictatorship," the radio said. Algeria, which has accused Iran of backing the Islamist militants, cut diplomatic ties with Tehran in 1993. Iran denies the charges.

### Turk troops kill 11 PKK rebels

TURKEY (R) — Turkish troops on Saturday killed 11 Kurdish guerrillas, bringing to 38 the toll in a clashes in eastern Turkey since six soldiers died in an ambush on Friday, military officials said. Authorities said extra security measures were in force against possible PKK attacks during parliamentary and local elections being held on Sunday. The six dead soldiers were among a unit returning to base near the village of Aktulak, about 20 km west of the town of Tunceli, when it was attacked by guerrillas loyal to captured Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Ocalan. The military responded by launching an operation backed by U.S.-built Super Cobra strike helicopters to hunt down the guerrillas in a heavily wooded mountainous area near the scene of the ambush, the military officials said. An officer said the clash with the PKK group, now numbering around 30, was continuing. The size of the military force opposing the guerrillas was put at about 3,000. The dead rebels included Emrullah Montes, a leading regional commander of the PKK in Tunceli, officials said.

### 50,000 protest for Ocalan's release

BONN (AFP) — More than 50,000 people demonstrated in Bonn on Saturday calling for peace for the Kurds and the release of Kurdish rebel leader Abdullah Ocalan, police said. Three separate groups of demonstrators shouting "Freedom for Ocalan" and "German tanks out of Kurdistan" converged on a park where a rally was scheduled later in the day. Hundreds of police reinforcements had been called in to ensure security during the demonstration. Organisers said they were hoping that 80,000 people would attend the rally, called ahead of legislative and municipal elections in Turkey. Ocalan is in custody on the Turkish prison island of Imrali.

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## Turk PM urges vote for stability in Sunday polls

ISTANBUL (R) — Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit urged the Turkish public on Saturday to vote into power a stable government, capable of delivering sorely needed economic reforms after Sunday's elections.

As he addressed a crowd of supporters in Turkey's commercial capital Istanbul, rival party leaders put the final touches to their poll campaigns in towns across the country.

"I am asking you to vote in the election for stability and reliability. Turkey needs economic and political stability," Ecevit told an enthusiastic rally of his Democratic Left Party (DSP) on the Asian shores of the continent-straddling Istanbul. "Ecevit for prime minister," chanted a crowd of several thousand, amid a sea of blue flags bearing the party's white dove emblem.

A similarly large crowd turned out in the central Anatolian town of Kayseri to pledge support for the Islamist Virtue Party.

The two parties are seen as front-runners, but the prospect of up to six parties entering parliament under Turkey's complex proportional-representation voting system has spread fears of a coalition too weak to implement crucial reform of the economy.

"Stability or crisis," said a banner headline in the Radical daily newspaper, warning that a fractious parliament could fuel Turkey's problem of chronic high inflation.

"You will not have the right to turn back for some five years if you do not make the right decision in these precious hours," said Bekir Coskun, a columnist in the Hurriyet daily.

Political analysts have said it may take as many as four parties to forge a coalition, leaving a question mark over banking, social security and agricultural reforms sought by the International Monetary Fund for financial support to Turkey.

Although publishing opinion polls has been banned ahead of

the elections, veteran leftist Ecevit is tipped as the contender to lead the pack, boosted by the capture of the country's public enemy number one, Kurdish rebel chief Abdullah Ocalan.

Ocalan's imminent trial on treason charges is unlikely to help Ecevit in the southeast, the mainly Kurdish region. It has taken the brunt of a 14-year insurgency by Ocalan's Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) in which more than 29,000 people have died.

The Kurdish Hadeep Party, which has little chance of winning seats in parliament under Turkey's voting system, could take control of some councils in parallel local polls, a possible source of concern for the central authorities.

Prosecutors are trying to close Hadeep and the nationwide Islamist Virtue Party on respective charges of separatism and threatening Turkey's secular system — legal challenges which could bring further complications after the election.

In the local polls, Virtue aims to keep control of major cities including Istanbul and the capital Ankara.

The possibility of parliamentary deadlock has unsettled Turkish financial markets this week. Shares jumped and dived 10 per cent in consecutive days as sentiment swung from optimism to fears that the instability of recent years would persist.

Four shaky coalitions faced an uphill struggle to stay in power during the previous parliament after 1995 elections failed to produce a clear winner.

Investors have placed their hopes on the resurrection of a recent alliance between Ecevit's DSP and the conservative Motherland Party of Mesut Yilmaz.

Their main concern, shared by the military, is an Islamist return to power. In 1997, the powerful army helped topple a coalition led by the Islam-based Welfare Party, since banned for anti-secularist activities.



ARCHERY COMPETITION IN JAPAN: An archer on a galloping horseback draws his bow before shooting at a target during a demonstration of ancient Japanese archery in downtown Tokyo on Saturday. The competition, initiated by samurai warriors dating in 1192, is still organised by historic preservation groups across the country to demonstrate the ancient sport (AP photo)

## U.S. warplanes hit air defence sites in Iraq Four killed in strikes — Baghdad

### Agencies

U.S. WARPLANES acting in "self-defence" bombed several air defence sites in northern Iraq on Saturday, the U.S. air force announced in a statement from the Incirlik air base in southeastern Turkey.

In Baghdad, a military spokesman said four Iraqis were killed and a fifth injured in raids by U.S. warplanes on northern Iraq.

"The bombardment left four citizens dead and another wounded," a spokesman for Iraq's anti-aircraft defence said, without specifying if the casualties were civilians or soldiers.

The spokesman, cited by the official INA news agency, said the raids targeted civilian sites as well

as anti-aircraft positions in northern Iraq.

F-15E Strike Eagle and F-16 fighters dropped GBU-12 bombs and fired AGM-130 missiles at several air defence sites to the north and northwest of the Iraqi second city of Mosul after coming under threat, the statement said.

EA-6B Prowler aircraft also fired AGM-88 missiles against radar positions in the same area, the statement said.

The strikes came between 1:40 p.m. and 2:40 p.m. (1040 and 1140 GMT) and all the aircraft returned safely to base, it said.

U.S. analysts were still assessing the damage inflicted on the Iraqi positions, the air force statement said.

The strikes were the first since March 16 carried

out against Iraqi positions by U.S. aircraft from the Incirlik base.

U.S. and British aircraft enforce no-fly zones over southern and northern Iraq which have been the scene of regular skirmishes between allied aircraft and Iraqi planes and air defences since the December U.S.-British air war, dubbed Operation Desert Fox.

Iraq does not recognise the legitimacy of the no-fly zones, which are not covered by a specific U.N. resolution, and has vowed to oppose them.

The northern air exclusion zone was set up in April 1991 to protect Iraq's Kurdish population while the southern zone was established in August 1992 in an attempt to prevent attacks on the Shiite Muslim population.

## Egypt may seek to draw more Nile water — minister

CAIRO (AP) — Egypt may seek to draw more water from the Nile River, the nation's water resource minister said Saturday, raising a possibility likely to spark controversy among the nine other countries that rely on the Nile.

Mahmoud Abdul Halim Abu Zeid did not say how much more water Egypt, which receives the largest share of Nile water, wants.

But he said increasing it

would happen only with the cooperation and agreement on the part of the Nile basin countries.

"We have future requests," Abu Zeid told the Associated Press at the two-day Arab conference on water and desertification, which opened Saturday. "Of course, other countries also have requests."

He did not say how Egypt intends to persuade other nations, each with their own

serious water needs, to allow Egypt a larger share.

Under a 1959 agreement, Egypt receives three times as much water as Sudan from the Nile. Water-tapped countries, including Sudan and Ethiopia, have called for equal shares for each country regardless of population or agricultural needs.

Ethiopia has argued that several ambitious Egyptian agricultural projects begun within

the last few years are part of an Egyptian attempt to secure even more of the water, and disregard the needs of other countries.

Abu Zeid said that water ministers from the 10 Nile basin countries will meet in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, in May for talks focusing on shares of Nile water, ways to exploit under-utilised Nile tributaries and more cooperation in joint water projects.

Nile water is being wasted, Abu Zeid said, adding that "only eight per cent is being used for the benefit" of Nile basin countries.

The White Nile and Blue Nile, which join near the Sudanese capital Khartoum, flow through 10 nations: Burundi, Egypt, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zaire. About 300 million people live along their banks.

## Iraq accuses Iran of stalling détente as PoW remains exchanged

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq accused Iran on Saturday of hindering the normalisation of relations because of the issue of PoWs from their bloody eight-year war, even as the two states exchanged the remains of 400 soldiers.

In an article marking the 11th anniversary of Iraq's recapture of the Fao peninsula from Iran, the Babel newspaper said: "Iraqi-Iranian ties are still not stabilised on a basis necessary for two Muslim neighbours."

"It seems certain parties in Iran want to stop a détente... since the prisoner of war issue has still not been resolved and Tehran still refuses to send back Iraqi

planes sent to Iran" prior to the 1991 Gulf War, said Babel, run by the eldest son of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Baghdad says it sent some 100 planes to Iran just before war erupted, in a bid to shelter them from allied strikes, but that these have still not been returned.

Babel also denounced "Iran's interference in Iraq's internal affairs, under various guises and in different ways."

The paper said Iran's involvement was especially unacceptable given that Tehran currently chairs the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

It said Iranian officials should take

into consideration "the political realities of the region, especially U.S. policy hostile to both nations."

Iraq likewise accuses Baghdad of supporting the Iraqi-based People's Mujahadeen, the leading Iranian opposition group.

But in a statement sent to Nicosia on Saturday the Mujahadeen denied there was any link between Baghdad and its own operations inside Iran.

It also said that Tehran was planning an air strike on Mujahadeen sites inside Iraq, adding that Iranian pilots and planes had been transferred to an air base near the border in preparation for

the raids.

The comments came as the two countries on Saturday handed over the remains of almost 400 soldiers killed during the 1980-88 conflict.

A total of 164 Iranian bodies were exchanged for those of 221 Iraqis at the Shalameja border post near the southern Iraqi city of Basra, according to the Iranian official in charge of the war mission.

"The bodies were delivered to Iranian officials after the army officials paid respects to them at an official military ceremony," Brigadier General Mir Feisal Baqerzadeh said.

### Milosevic angry at press invasion

LONDON (AFP) — For Slobodan Milosevic, the strain of so much media attention since the start of the NATO bombing campaign against Yugoslavia has proved too much. Milosevic, who calls himself Dan and lives in Essex, eastern England, has complained to the British press watchdog of harassment. His patience snapped after hordes of journalists descended on his doorstep and began quizzing his neighbours about the novelty of living near a man who shares the Serbian leader's name. He fired off a strongly-worded letter to the Press Complaints Commission, listing a dozen news organisations that have tried to contact him, his family and neighbours. Milosevic, who has lived in Britain for 19 years, told the PCC he wished to "state categorically" that he was not related to the president of Yugoslavia, he had no links with the former Yugoslav republics and did not want to discuss his views on the Balkans with anyone.

### Band fired for bad anthems

LAGOS (R) — The army band which has been playing the national anthems at the World Youth Cup has been fired following out-of-tune performances. Pre-recorded national anthems replaced live versions for the second round ties with local media reporting it was because the band was hitting too many wrong notes. "They play well alright but they lack precision," the ceremonial committee was quoted as saying. Brazilian players grimaced at the way their anthem was played before a game with Zambia. The off-key anthem was played at about half its normal speed and was barely recognisable.

### Canine truck plan angers dog owners

NORTH EAST (R) — Animal protection activists could not have sparked a bigger uproar in rural Cecil County, Maryland, if they had tried to ban fishing poles. Just ask Gene Howell, 75, who is rarely seen travelling the lush countryside along the upper reaches of Chesapeake Bay without his black lab, Chief, bobbing up and down in the back of his green GMC pickup truck. "Some people don't have nothing to do but sit around and think up these crazy ideas," he told Friday's Baltimore Sun after the Cecil County Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals asked local officials to make it illegal for dogs to ride in truck beds. "I suppose what I could do is have my wife ride in the back and let the dog ride up front with me," he added wryly. "Course, I don't know that my wife would say back there like the dog does. The dog is trained."

### Inmate charged with faking Reno letter

NEWARK (R) — A New Jersey inmate has been indicted for impersonating Attorney General Janet Reno in a letter, created on a prison computer, asking for his immediate release. Erwin Koti, who was serving a 24-month sentence for bank fraud at the Fort Dix federal prison, composed the letter on a prison education department computer available to all inmates, and affixed a signature purporting to be Reno's. U.S. Attorney Faith Hochberg said. The November 1998 letter, which was directed to a unit manager at Fort Dix, asserted that all criminal charges against Koti had been dropped and suggested that officials should release him or face significant consequences, according to the indictment.